SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) — level 3 (SCQF level 6)

F99F 04: Improving Productivity Using IT 3

5 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6

Description: This is the ability to plan, evaluate and improve procedures involving the use of IT tools and systems to improve the productivity and efficiency of tasks and activities.

Outcome	Skills and Techniques	Knowledge and Understanding
On completion of this Unit the candidate should be able to:		
1 Plan, select and use appropriate IT systems and software for different purposes.	1 Develop **plans for using IT** for different tasks and purposes, including contingencies. 2 Select and use appropriate IT systems and software applications to produce effective Outcomes.	1 Explain the **purpose for using IT**. 2 Analyse the methods, skills and resources required to complete the task successfully. 3 Analyse any **factors that may affect the task**. 4 Critically compare alternative methods to produce the intended Outcome. 5 Explain **why different software applications could be chosen** to suit different tasks, purposes and Outcomes. 6 Explain any **legal or local guidelines or constraints** which apply to the task or activity.
2 Evaluate the selection and use of IT tools to make sure that activities are successful.	1 **Review ongoing use** of IT tools and techniques and change the approach as needed. 2 **Evaluate and test solutions** to make sure they match requirements and are fit for purpose. 3 Be prepared to **give feedback** on other people's selection and use of IT tools.	1 Critically compare the **strengths and weaknesses** of own and other people's final work. 2 Explain different ways to make further **improvements to work**.
3 Devise solutions to improve the use of IT tools and systems for self and others.	1 **Develop solutions** that make a demonstrable improvement to the use of IT tools and systems. 2 Test solutions to make sure that they work as intended. 3 Recommend improvements to IT systems and procedures that increase productivity.	1 Evaluate the productivity and efficiency of IT systems and procedures used by self and others. 2 Research and advise on **ways to improve productivity and efficiency**.

Note: The **emboldened** items are exemplified in the Support Notes.

Evidence Requirements

Completion of a portfolio (manual, electronic or combination) to cover all of the Skills and Techniques and Knowledge and Understanding points stated above. The evidence generated should adhere to the Assessment Strategy for this award and encompass a range of evidence types.

General information

This Unit equates to NOS (National Occupational Standards for IT Users 2009) IPU: Improving Productivity Using IT level 3. It has a stated number of SCQF credit points = 5 at SCQF level 6.

Support Notes

Summary

A SCQF level 6 (ITQ level 3) user can plan and review their use of predefined or commonly used IT tools for activities most of which are complex and non-routine. As a result of reviewing their work, they will be able to devise solutions in the use of IT tools in order to improve productivity. They will take considerable responsibility and autonomy, and be prepared to offer support and advice to others.

An activity will typically be 'complex and non-routine' because:

♦ the task or context is likely to require research, analysis and interpretation
♦ the work may be undertaken by others
♦ the techniques required will be complex, and the selection process may involve analysis, research, identification and application

Examples of context which illustrate typical activities which might be undertaken by users:

♦ an improvement may be adapting an off-the-shelf solution to create a bespoke database to manage customer relationships in a marketing context

Examples of content are given separately for highlighted text, where explanatory notes are required on terminology in the Outcomes, and do not form part of the standards. Such examples are not meant to form a prescriptive list for the purposes of assessment but rather to amplify and interpret the generic terms used in the performance criteria in the light of current usage of ICT systems and software. These examples are subject to change as new tools and techniques become commonplace and older ones drift out of use.

The examples given below are indicative of the learning content and are not intended to form a prescriptive list for the purpose of assessment.

Outcome 1

Purposes for using IT: Who and what the information is for, when it must be finished, what information needs to be included, where it will be used (on screen, sent to others, printed).

Plan task: What information sources are needed, how they will be found and evaluated, what application software will be used, what skills and resources are needed to complete the task successfully, requirements for content, structure and layout; *priorities*, *potential problems.*

Factors that may affect the task: Access to information, steps that need to be taken in advance, availability of time, budget and resources; audience need.

Reasons for choosing IT: Time, convenience, cost; benefits of IT or manual methods of preparing, processing, presenting *and managing* information; convenience and effectiveness at meeting needs, quality, accuracy; how IT can make tasks easier than other methods, streamline business processes, increase productivity, any difficulties people have in using IT, *ROI.*

Legal or local guidelines or constraints: May include data protection, copyright, software licensing; security; organisational house-style or brand guidelines.

Outcome 2

Strengths and weaknesses of final work: Format, layout, accuracy, clarity for audience, structure, style, quality, *efficiency.*

Review use of IT tools: Evaluate whether the IT tools and techniques are appropriate to the task and intended Outcome, run user tests, compare with other IT tools and techniques, find ways to optimise the choice and approach.

Review Outcomes: Evaluate the quality of the information used, produce drafts, review against initial plans, check with intended audience, *impact of work on others.*

Improvements to work: Correct mistakes, avoid affecting other people's work, more efficient and effective ways of doing things, learning new techniques; *ways to improve others' or organisational efficiency.*

Give feedback: Strengths, weaknesses, potential improvements.

Outcome 3

Ways to improve productivity and efficiency: Save time, save money, streamline work processes, increase output, improve quality of outputs; total cost of solution; business benefit.

Develop solutions: Set up short cuts, customise interface, record macros, create templates, create style guides; streamline business processes.

Guidance on examples of evidence

In order to reflect the standards of competence expected by employers, all evidence for the ITQ mandatory Unit must be naturally occurring from IT activities undertaken for a specific and real purpose.

The setting in which candidates are assessed should be a realistic working environment (see Criteria for realistic working environments — Annex A.1.1 of SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) Assessment Strategy, Scotland, page 10).

The evidence for the assessment of the mandatory Unit that candidates provide will come from tasks or activities. The end user will typically specify the purpose and general content for the tasks. In many situations, the candidate's employer or client will specify the end product.

Valid evidence can also arise from:

♦ the search for employment (eg CVs, job applications and emails to potential employers)
♦ social activities (eg club membership databases, posters and websites)
♦ enterprise activities (eg business plans, budgets and marketing materials)
♦ voluntary activities (eg cash flows, programmes and newsletters)
♦ learning and studying subjects other than IT (eg internet research for a geography assignment, reports/dissertations and presentations)

It is for the assessor to ensure that the activities were for a real purpose. Assessors may wish to consider items such as product evidence, candidate statements, candidate checklists and/or knowledge tests in relation to these tasks/activities.

Typical examples of evidence for Outcome 1

A candidate would be expected to plan, select and use IT systems for specific purposes taking into account intended audience, deadlines, information sources, format, content, potential hardware/software difficulties and be aware of data protection and other legal requirements applying. The candidate should also compare alternative methods of solution to the given task, explaining their strengths and weaknesses.

Typical examples of evidence for Outcome 2

The candidate would be expected to evaluate their ongoing selection and use of IT tools. They would be expected to review and change their approaches as required, to evaluate and test solutions thus ensuring fitness for purpose and be able to provide feedback on the choice of IT tools made by others. The candidate should also be prepared to explain the strengths and weaknesses in the choice and work of others and suggest improvements to overcome these.

Typical examples of evidence for Outcome 3

The candidate would be expected to demonstrate their ability to devise IT solutions to given tasks thus improving the use of IT tools and systems for themselves and others. They would be expected to develop, implement and test solutions to tasks and to suggest performance improvements leading to enhanced productivity.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**