

Plan the workforce

WM42 - SQA Unit Code H2LB 04

This national occupational standard D4 belongs to the MSC – the standards setting body for management and leadership

Area of competence

This unit is about taking a lead in identifying the workforce requirements of your organisation and how these will be satisfied. It involves considering the strategic objectives and plans of the organisation to decide whether the workforce should be expanded, maintained or contracted. It also involves considering whether there is an appropriate mix of people to achieve the organisation's objectives, and whether any problems with this can be sorted out by recruiting staff, moving staff to other positions or making staff redundant. 'Workforce' covers any person who works for the organisation. Colleagues do not have to be directly employed as there is a wide range of contractual arrangements which could be used to provide the people the organisation needs, and part of the planning process is to decide how this is managed. For the purposes of this unit, an 'organisation' can mean a self-contained entity such as a private sector company, a charity or a local authority, or a significant operating unit, with a relative degree of autonomy, within a larger organisation.

Who is the unit for?

The unit is recommended for senior managers.

Links to other units

This unit is closely linked to units **B3. Develop a strategic business plan for your organisation**, **B4. Put the strategic business plan into action** and **D3. Recruit, select and keep colleagues** in the overall suite of National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership.

If your organisation is a small firm, you should look at unit *J1 Review your staffing*, which has been developed by the Small Firms Enterprise and Development Initiative (SFEDI) specifically for small firms and which **may** be more suitable to your needs. You can obtain information on the unit from SFEDI on tel. 0114 241 2155 or at the SFEDI website (www.sfedi.co.uk).

Skills

Listed below are the main generic 'skills' that need to be applied in planning the workforce. These skills are explicit/implicit in the detailed content of the unit and are listed here as additional information.

- Analysing
- Balancing competing needs and interests
- Communicating
- Contingency-planning
- Decision-making
- Evaluating
- Information management
- Monitoring
- Planning
- Prioritising
- Thinking creatively

- Thinking strategically

Outcomes of effective performance

You must be able to do the following:

1. Evaluate the organisation's strategic objectives and associated plans to obtain information needed for workforce planning purposes and identify any key issues for further consideration.
2. Identify the type of skills, knowledge, understanding and experience required to undertake current and planned organisational activities.
3. Review capacity and capability of the current workforce to meet identified skills, knowledge, understanding and experience requirements.
4. Seek and make use of specialist expertise to assist in workforce planning activities, as necessary.
5. Specify workforce requirements that are capable of achieving the organisation's objectives.
6. Make sure that the organisation has a diverse workforce which provides a suitable mix of people to achieve its objectives.
7. Make sure the cultural needs and requirements of your workforce are considered to maximise efficiency for the organisation.
8. Develop plans that meet the organisation's long, medium, and short-term requirements, making best use of people from inside and from outside the organisation.
9. Ensure a mix of full-time, part-time, temporary and contractual workers appropriate to the needs of the organisation.
10. Make sure that resources needed to recruit, keep and redeploy people are available.
11. Make sure that plans incorporate contingency arrangements to deal with unforeseen circumstances and maintain business continuity.
12. Communicate workforce plans to relevant people for information.

Behaviours which underpin effective performance

13. You recognise the opportunities presented by the diversity of people.
14. You are vigilant for potential risks.
15. You identify systemic issues and trends and recognise their effect on current and future work.
16. You anticipate likely future scenarios based on realistic analysis of trends and developments.
17. You take decisions in uncertain situations or based on incomplete information when necessary.
18. You take and implement difficult and/or unpopular decisions, if necessary.
19. You work towards a clearly defined vision of the future.
20. You use communication styles that are appropriate to different people and situations.

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand the following:

General knowledge and understanding

- a. What an effective workforce plan should cover.
- b. The information required to undertake workforce planning.

- c. Sources of specialist expertise in relation to workforce planning and how to make use of them.
- d. Legislation and requirements relating to employment, workers' welfare and rights, equality and health and safety.
- e. How to take account of equality, diversity and inclusion issues in workforce planning.
- f. Strategies and/or services which need to be in place for when people leave, including redundancy counselling.
- g. The importance of putting contingency arrangements in place and how to do so effectively.
- h. How a multicultural and international workforce can benefit the organisation.
- i. The different ways in which workforce requirements can be met, their advantages and disadvantages, costs and benefits.

Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

- j. Types of employment agreements typically used within the industry/sector.
- k. Patterns for employing, recruiting, and keeping people in the industry/sector.
- l. Trends and developments in the sector which are relevant to workforce planning.
- m. Legislation, regulations and codes of practice that apply in the industry/sector.
- n. Working culture and practices of the industry/sector.

Context specific knowledge and understanding

- o. The organisation's vision, strategic objectives and associated plans, structure, values and culture.
- p. Employment agreements with people working in and for the organisation.
- q. The capacity and capability of the current workforce.
- r. The diversity of the organisation's workforce.
- s. Factors affecting workforce planning in the organisation.
- t. Local employment market conditions.
- u. Employment policies and practices within the organisation – including recruitment, selection, induction, development, promotion, retention, redundancy, dismissal, pay and other terms and conditions.