

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

**Unit code:** D7XF 35

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is about perceptual processes, the effect they have on perception of others, the communication process and group behaviour. It provides both theoretical knowledge and the opportunity to apply this knowledge.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Analyse the effect of perceptual processes on the judgement of others in interpersonal encounters
2. Analyse communication problems encountered in interpersonal interaction
3. Communicate within a group to complete a given task.

**Credit value:** 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

*SCQF (the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) brings Scottish qualifications into a single framework of 12 levels ranging from SQA Access 1 to doctorates. The SCQF includes degrees; HNC/Ds; SQA National Qualifications; and SVQs. Each SQA Unit is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at a specific level. 1 SCQF point = 10 hours of learning. HN candidates are normally expected to input a further number of hours, matched to the credit value of the Unit, of non-contact time or candidate-led effort to consolidate and reinforce learning.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, but it would be beneficial if the candidate had competence in communication and group skills as shown by possession of the following:

- National Unit EE3T 12 (7110055) *Communication (NC)*
- Higher *English and Communication* or its component Units
- Core Skill Communication at Higher
- Core Skill Working with Others at Intermediate 2

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.



## **Higher National Unit specification: General information for centres (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

**Assessment:** The strategy for assessment in this Unit is that the candidate must be able to show an understanding of how perceptual processes affect the communication process on an individual level and as a member of a group. Outcomes 1 and 2 can be assessed using written and/or oral evidence and Outcome 3 requires evidence of the candidate's own effectiveness as a group member, and an analysis and evaluation of group function.

In Outcome 1 the candidate is required to describe the underpinning theoretical knowledge and apply it to practical examples. In Outcome 2 the candidate is required to analyse one interaction using an accepted model of communication. In Outcome 3 the candidate is required to take part in an activity and to analyse the functioning of a group.

A Unit Assessment Exemplar has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 8.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Analyse the effect of perceptual processes on the judgement of others in interpersonal encounters

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Awareness of perceptual processes
- Current theories and models of perception/interpersonal perception
- Effects of perceptual processes on perceiving others
- Practical application of theory
- Strategies to avoid distorted perception

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate should demonstrate knowledge and/or skills in a written and/or oral extended response of a minimum 1000 words or ten minutes which shows that he/she can:

- give an overview of perceptual processes
- demonstrate current theoretical knowledge: perceptual set, Intuition model, Inference model
- apply theoretical knowledge to four practical illustrations involving interpersonal encounters
- analyse the effects of perceptual processes on judgement
- describe strategies that might be used to avoid distorted perception.

The response should be an open-book assessment and assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Outcome 1 provides the candidate with underpinning knowledge of perceptual processes and it is therefore recommended that it should be delivered first.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

#### **Outcome 2**

Analyse communication problems encountered in interpersonal interaction

##### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Theories and models of communication
- The role of perceptual selection in the communication process
- Sources of communication problems – social and cultural
- The significance of verbal and non-verbal codes in the communication process
- Practical application of theory

##### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by providing detailed written and/or oral responses to structured questions on a video case study which illustrates the failure of the communication process at some stage/s. Responses should show that he/she can:

- describe relevant communication theory
- explain the communication process in terms of a relevant model
- analyse the interpretation of verbal and non-verbal communication cues and codes
- explain the effect of differential interpretations on perception.

Evidence should be produced in closed-book, supervised conditions.

##### **Assessment guidelines**

Candidates should be given at least two opportunities to analyse and make notes on a video extract before answering structured questions. The video extract should be between five and ten minutes long.

#### **Outcome 3**

Communicate within a group to complete a given task

##### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Differences between formal and informal groups
- Influences of informal groups on the performance of formal groups
- The structure and functioning of groups
- The application of theory to practical situations
- Skills in supportive co-operation
- Appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Analytical and evaluative approaches to effective group performance

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by participating in an activity which shows that he/she can:

- support co-operative working within a group to complete a task
- complete a written and/or oral evaluation of group performance which shows that he/she can:
  - analyse relationships and internal structures
  - evaluate effectiveness of a group activity
  - identify ways of enhancing collaborative work.

A video-recording and/or detailed observation checklist should be completed for each candidate.

An analysis and evaluation of this or another appropriate group activity should be produced by the candidate.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Each candidate will have to demonstrate his/her own interpersonal skills by working with others in a group to complete a task. The scenario should be agreed in advance to allow for preparation, and may be a role play.

## **Administrative Information**

**Unit code:** D7XF 35

**Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

**Superclass category:** HB

**Date of publication:** December 2001

**Source:** SQA

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## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Interpersonal and Group Skills

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

In this Unit there is the opportunity for candidates to explore their perception of others, gain an understanding of the communication process and contribute to the effective performance of a group.

Theory should be supported by illustrative material in the form of written and video case studies and candidates should be given the opportunity to discuss these case studies in depth.

Useful texts are:

Ellis & McClintock	<i>If You Take My Meaning</i>
Gross R	<i>The Science of the Mind and Behaviour</i>
Huczynski A	<i>Organisational Behaviour: An Introductory Text</i>
Pennington D	<i>Essential Social Psychology</i>

The website [www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk](http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk) is a good source of information for all three Outcomes.

### Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

#### Outcome 1

It is useful to spend some time on perception in general, before moving on to interpersonal perception. Candidates can be introduced to the processes of selection, organisation and inference, and direct and indirect theories of perception, before studying perceptual set.

The assessor should cover the Intuition and Inference Models of interpersonal perception ensuring that candidates are familiar with the following:

Central v Peripheral Traits  
Primacy – Recency Effect  
Attribution Process  
Implicit Personality Theories

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

Candidates should be encouraged to relate case study material to the theories which have been discussed.

#### **Outcome 1 assessment.**

When setting the question for this assessment assessors may wish to consider providing guidelines for the candidates on what is required in an extended response for this topic.

#### **Outcome 2**

Candidates should cover more than one communication theory/model. Assessors may find it useful to begin with Shannon and Weaver, before moving on to other models such as Berlo's S-M-C-R Model, Osgood and Schramm's Circular Model, Lasswell's Formula or Gerbner's Model. These models can be used to explain differential interpretations of verbal and non-verbal cues/codes.

The importance of non-verbal communication in the communication process should be highlighted and the variations which exist should be discussed using video extracts to facilitate analysis.

The candidates should have the opportunity to apply the theory they have learned by examining a variety of examples of interpersonal communication in which misunderstandings have arisen because of social or cultural factors.

#### **Outcome 2 assessment**

This should consist of a set of structured questions on a short video extract (5 – 10 minutes). Candidates should see the extract at least twice before sitting the assessment. They should be allowed to take one A4 page of notes into the assessment. These notes should be checked by the assessor prior to the assessment being issued, to ensure that they only cover the content of the video extract, and contain no references to other material taught in this Outcome.

The interaction should be analysed in detail by referring to the stages on one recognised communication model as it applies to the situation.

The analysis should include an explanation of the choices/selection made by the sender/communicator/encoder concerning the:

- event/situation
- form and content of the message
- medium

and the choices made by the recipient/receiver/decoder.

The non verbal communication of each participant should be examined and its effect on the communication process should be explained.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

#### **Outcome 3**

Candidates should be aware of the differences between formal and informal groups and how the latter can influence the performance of the former in the workplace. Assessors may wish to refer to the Hawthorne Studies as a means of illustrating this influence.

All aspects of group structure should be covered: role, leadership, liking, power, status but assessors may wish to devote more time to certain areas such as leadership, covering the types of leadership and their effect on the communication and functioning of the group.

Candidates should be encouraged to discuss their own experiences relating to group membership and should be given the opportunity to participate in a minimum of two group tasks before assessment. In these formative exercises the effectiveness of the group's performance in relation to aspects such as role behaviour, leadership, verbal and non-verbal communication skills should be explored.

#### **Outcome 3 assessment**

This assessment should involve a group activity which is likely to take 30 minutes to complete. Recording the activity on video will assist later analysis. Alternatively candidates may analyse another group's performance, preferably by studying a video of the event.

The candidates are also required to write an evaluation group activity. It will be helpful if they are provided with proforma to assist their evaluation.

### **Open and distance learning**

There is no reason why this Unit cannot be used for open learning, although ideally much of the teaching should be experiential group and interpersonal activities. For Outcome 1 open-book assessment should be conducted under conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work and the closed-book conditions for Outcome 2 should be delivered in a supervised environment under conditions, where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work. As the Outcome 3 assessment requires candidates to take part in a group activity, arrangements would have to be made for candidates to come to the centre to complete this. Alternatively, the group activity could be recorded on video and sent to the assessor.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 – publication code A1030).

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

### **Special needs**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs and Candidates for whom English is an Additional Language* (SQA, 2000).

## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title:** Interpersonal and Group Skills

This Unit is about the perceptual process that affect the perception of others, the communication process and group behaviour. It provides both theoretical knowledge and the opportunity to apply this knowledge.

Before you are assessed you will have ample opportunity to:

- analyse a range of written and video case studies which call upon you to judge others
- analyse a range of written and video case studies which deal with misunderstandings/communication problems
- participate in group discussions which call upon you to complete a specific task.

You will be required to undertake three assessments:

1. You will be required to produce an extended response on interpersonal perception. In this response you will deal with theory and will supply relevant illustrative material.
2. You will answer a set of questions on a short video extract, which you will have seen previously. These questions will require you to explain a particular theory of communication, apply this theory to the extract you have watched and explain why the problems have arisen.
3. You will be required to take part in a group activity. In addition you will have to produce an evaluation of a group activity.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Analyse the effect of perceptual processes on the judgement of others in interpersonal encounters
2. Analyse communication problems encountered in interpersonal interaction
3. Communicate within a group to complete a given task