

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 1)

Unit code: DE28 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates, with basic shorthand skills, to develop shorthand writing skills and produce an accurate transcription of shorthand notes within time constraints, using a word processor.

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

- 1 Use a recognised shorthand system to produce accurate notes within time constraints.
- 2 Produce an accurate transcript of shorthand notes, using a word processor, within time constraints.

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

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have good communication skills. These may be demonstrated by the achievement of core skill Communication at Higher level or by possession of Higher English and Communication or a suitable equivalent. Candidates should also have keyboarding, word processing and document presentation skills. In addition, candidates should have competence in using a recognised shorthand system and be able to write shorthand at a minimum of 60 words per minute. This may be demonstrated by Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory) (DE27 34), an equivalent or experience of using shorthand in a working environment.

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: This Unit is included as an option in the framework for the HNC/HND Administration and Information Technology. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

Assessment: The assessment for this Unit will be the production of documents produced from material dictated at a speed to produce finished copy, within time constraints, and under closed book conditions. Candidates, however, may access a dictionary during assessment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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

This Unit lends itself to holistic assessment. Please refer to knowledge and/or skills for the Unit and Evidence Requirements for the Unit after the Outcomes.

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

Use a recognised shorthand system to produce accurate notes within time constraints.

Knowledge and/or skills

- speed development
- vocabulary building
- listening skills
- memorising techniques

Outcome 2

Produce an accurate transcript of shorthand notes, using a word processor, within time constraints.

Knowledge and/or skills

- transcription techniques
- planning and organising work within deadlines
- document presentation
- proof-reading skills

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to show they can accurately transcribe shorthand notes, dictated at a speed of 70 words per minute. This must be demonstrated by recording and transcribing a document of 140 words, on at least 3 occasions. Shorthand notes must be attached to the document submitted.

Documents should be transcribed following organisational/house style. Transcription time should be no longer than 22 minutes per document.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 1)

To be successful, the candidate must produce an accurate transcription, within an error tolerance of 5 errors per document, including errors in transcription and presentation. Where a candidate has 5 errors or less, then the candidate will be permitted to amend the work submitted to produce a final copy.

Amendments can be made outwith the time allocated for transcription.

Where a candidate has 6 errors or more, in a document, then the candidate will be required to undertake an alternative assessment.

Assessment guidelines

The Assessment of this Outcome should be combined with Outcome 1 as part of a single assessment, carried out under closed book conditions.

Candidates may access a dictionary during assessment.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DE28 35

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 1)

Superclass category: AZ

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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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

The Unit is primarily intended to extend the candidate's ability to write shorthand at speed. It is recognised that the need for traditional shorthand dictation of correspondence, ie manager/secretary, is in decline. Therefore, this Unit should build a general vocabulary, rather than an exclusive business vocabulary, as it is expected that candidates would use the skills acquired, in a business setting, to undertake, for example, note-taking at meetings which may require a good general vocabulary.

Outcome 1 extends speed development, listening skills and memorising techniques, as well as expanding vocabulary. Working to deadlines is reinforced.

Outcome 2 extends transcription techniques and reinforces the need to plan, organise and check work.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Candidates undertaking this unit are likely to be working towards a group award which is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to undertake a supervisory position in an administrative context. The skill of shorthand will greatly improve employment prospects, especially where committee servicing is required. The vocabulary introduced in the teaching of this course should not be restricted to business words and phrases. Committee administration, in particular, requires a good, general vocabulary.

Assessment for this Unit will be as follows:

Candidates will be required to produce a document of at least 140 words, dictated at 70 words per minute, using a word processor, on at least 3 occasions. Documents should be transcribed following organisational/house style. Transcription time should be no longer than 22 minutes per document. To be successful, the candidate must produce an accurate transcription, within an error tolerance of 5 errors per passage, including errors in transcription and presentation. Where a candidate has 5 errors or less, then the candidate will be allowed to amend the work submitted to produce a final copy. Amendments can be made outwith the time allocated for transcription. Where a candidate has 6 errors or more, then the candidate will be required to undertake an alternative assessment. Shorthand notes must be attached to the document submitted.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by an open learning course. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the single assessment for Learning Outcomes 1 and 2 is delivered in a supervised environment under closed book conditions.

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

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 Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

General information for candidates

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This Unit is designed to enable to develop your shorthand skills and increase speed.

In order to achieve this Unit successfully, you will have to demonstrate that you understand and can use a recognised shorthand system. This will be demonstrated by assessment where you must produce a document, dictated at a speed of 70 words per minute, within time constraints on 3 separate occasions.

Shorthand is a useful skill and has many applications in a modern business environment – for example, note-taking at meetings. As potential office administrators, this skill will improve employment prospects.