

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Professional Development: Professional Effectiveness

Unit code: DV7N 36

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to improve their professional effectiveness by means of developing their practical skills and knowledge in analysing the value of existing information from their own professional fields. Candidates will be given the opportunity to enhance and develop their capacity to improve their performance by reviewing and evaluating the utility of trends and developments within their professional field in order to enhance their professional effectiveness. Candidates will be able to explore a range of options and implement and assess strategies and plans aimed at improving outputs or results.

On completion of the Unit, candidates should be able to:

- 1 Analyse developing trends within own professional field.
- 2 Evaluate the relevance of trends and explain their importance to own professional practice and needs of their organisation.
- 3 Apply the findings of trend evaluation to professional practice and needs of their organisation.
- 4 Critically evaluate the results of application of findings of trend evaluation to professional practice and needs of their organisation.

Credit points and level: 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 9: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9*).

**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 credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have well developed communication and inter-personal skills and be able to demonstrate the ability to think analytically and systematically. They should be able to use these skills to give an account of their experiences, reflect on them, make valid conclusions and express strengths and development needs, both personal and organisational.

Core Skills: There are opportunities for developing the Core Skills of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6, Working with Others at SCQF level 6 and Communication at SCQF level 6 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.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit should relate to the professional and vocational contexts that are meaningful and relevant to candidates.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: The focus of this Unit is on acquiring professional development skills and applying research and evaluation techniques to improve professional performance. It is suitable for holistic assessment and could be assessed using a portfolio approach.

If a portfolio approach is used, the portfolio will probably include several different types of item covering both product and process. These could be personal reflective accounts by candidates, records of interview(s) between the assessor and candidates, feedback from others involved in the process, such as witness testimony, products of the process and so on. It could also include literature reviews (eg professional field trends), charts, logs, development plans, customer evaluation data and analysis of that data.

This Unit requires candidate(s) to generate evidence that is substantive enough to demonstrate changes in development and practice. However, consideration also needs to be given to the notional time allocated to this Unit. This is particularly relevant to the volume of current and emerging trends that are considered in Outcome 1.

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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 developing trends within own professional field

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Key data sources
- ◆ Current and emerging trends within profession
- ◆ Benchmarks and professional standards
- ◆ Analytical tools
- ◆ Relevant issues and/or key themes

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills outlined above. This evidence will be based on an analysis of their own professional field and will show that they can:

- ◆ identify key data and explain current and emerging professional trends arising from this
- ◆ evaluate suitable benchmarks and/or professional standards and review potential benefits
- ◆ make practical use of at least **one** analytical tool
- ◆ identify relevant issues and themes to be addressed as a result of the analysis

Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that this evidence should form part of a portfolio. The portfolio entries should satisfy the evidence requirements of this Outcome.

The assessment of this Outcome should be based on candidates' own professional field, practice and experience.

Appropriate methods for a candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of an analytical approach to current professional trends include explanation, description, logs and charts. For example, candidates may demonstrate their exploration and analysis of trends through an activity report which expounds the data gathering methods and analytical techniques used.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 2

Evaluate the relevance of trends and explain their importance to own professional practice and needs of their organisation

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Relevance of particular trends to own professional practice
- ◆ Professional performance needs
- ◆ Needs of organisation
- ◆ Agenda for action

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating their ability to evaluate the importance of trends to their own professional practice and environment. They will show that they can:

- ◆ evaluate the relevance of particular trends in the context of their own professional practice and the needs of their organisation
- ◆ analyse their own professional performance needs
- ◆ prepare agenda(s) for action and improvement to be taken in the light of the trend analysis

Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that this evidence should form part of a portfolio. The portfolio entries should satisfy the evidence requirements of this Outcome.

The assessment of this Outcome should be based on candidates' own professional field, practice and experience.

Appropriate methods for a candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of evaluation of the importance of trends to their own professional practice and environment include explanation, description, logs, charts and plans. For example, candidates might demonstrate their understanding of improvements or further information needs resulting from trend analysis by listing their intended future activities in an agenda for action.

Outcome 3

Apply the findings of trend evaluation to professional practice and needs of their organisation

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Success criteria
- ◆ Development planning
- ◆ Progress monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ Problem solving and contingency planning

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Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating their ability to apply the findings of trend evaluation to their own professional practice. With particular reference to implementing a plan, candidates will show that they can:

- ◆ specify success criteria
- ◆ create a development plan or plans in relation to their findings and analysis
- ◆ monitor and evaluate progress and success in a plan's implementation
- ◆ identify and manage problems, changes and other contingencies arising from implementation of a plan

Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that this evidence should form part of a portfolio. The portfolio entries should satisfy the evidence requirements of this Outcome.

The assessment of this Outcome should be based on candidates' own professional field, practice and experience.

Appropriate methods for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a developmental approach in response to current professional trends include explanation, description, logs, charts and plans.

Outcome 4

Critically evaluate the results of application of findings to trend evaluation to professional practice and needs of their organisation

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Significant results
- ◆ Tools and/or techniques of evaluation
- ◆ Sustainability of achievements
- ◆ Future action

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating the ability to evaluate the results of the application of trend analysis to their own professional practice. They will show that they can:

- ◆ select key results from the development plan and justify why they are significant in comparison to others
- ◆ evaluate the improvement in professional performance using at least **one** tool and/or technique
- ◆ evaluate the potential sustainability of improvements achieved
- ◆ prepare agenda(s) for future action and research

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Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that this evidence should form part of a portfolio. The portfolio entries should satisfy the evidence requirements of this Outcome.

The assessment of this Outcome should be based on candidates' own professional field, practice and experience.

Appropriate methods for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of an evaluative approach to application of current professional trends include explanation, description, logs, charts and plans.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DV7N 36
Unit title:	Professional Development: Professional Effectiveness
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Professional Development: Professional Effectiveness

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is intended for candidates in a range of occupational and professional situations who are involved in a process of developing their own professional effectiveness. It focuses specifically on practical approaches to the development and implementation of methodologies and techniques related to candidates' professional effectiveness. These include elements of:

- ◆ environmental scanning
- ◆ market research
- ◆ survey techniques and content analysis
- ◆ statistical and qualitative analysis techniques
- ◆ scenario planning
- ◆ forecasting and qualitative foresight
- ◆ quality standards
- ◆ sector skills standards

The overall purpose of the Unit is to enhance and develop candidates' capacity to improve performance by reviewing and evaluating the utility of trends and developments within their professional fields in order to enhance their professional effectiveness. Successful candidates will be able to explore a range of options and implement and assess strategies and plans aimed at improving outputs or results.

'Professional Effectiveness' refers to how effective an individual's actions, decisions and professional knowledge are in maximising their output within the professional environment. Part of this effectiveness is to do with how knowledge and skills are deployed in the context of the aims of the individual's organisation.

This Unit covers a selection of professional effectiveness skills associated with benchmarking and trend analysis. The Unit involves identifying, analysing, evaluating, filtering and using trends and developments within the profession in order to enhance professional effectiveness and results. Specifically, these skills will enable candidates to be able to identify current and emerging trends from within their own professional fields, using a variety of data and analytical tools appropriate to their situations. In support of the identification and gathering of benchmark data, candidates might use techniques such as electronic search, surveys and performance measurement. They will be able to identify key trends and themes to be addressed and will be able to evaluate the usefulness of the information gathered. They will be able to analyse the importance of current and emerging trends, establishing clear patterns and seeing the relative importance of a range of issues. This trend analysis will involve the application of one or more analytical tools and/or techniques, for example:

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- ◆ environmental scanning
- ◆ options appraisal
- ◆ cost/benefit analysis
- ◆ forecasting techniques
- ◆ network analysis
- ◆ chart patterns and pattern analysis
- ◆ moving averages
- ◆ content analysis

Candidates will then be able to prioritise their findings into an agenda for effective action that can be used to apply new knowledge to their existing situations. This they will be able to transform into a plan that can be implemented, taking into account contingencies and problems. They will be able to measure the effectiveness of their work and develop an agenda for future action. The evaluative tools and/or techniques used to measure this effectiveness might be selected from:

- ◆ performance management systems eg balanced scorecard, business excellence model
- ◆ project evaluation
- ◆ benefits evaluation
- ◆ self assessment
- ◆ questionnaires
- ◆ cognitive walkthrough
- ◆ heuristic evaluation

On successful completion of the Unit, candidates will be able maintain, develop and promote their own professional effectiveness and, in turn, the general effectiveness of their wider professional environment. They will be able to transfer or generalise skills in identification of relevant features, evaluation, context-specific assimilation of data and analysis of results to a range of different situations. Additionally, they will be able to plan and implement strategies and methodologies for promoting development in respect of a range of different problems. Having acquired a set of core skills in professional effectiveness they will be able to approach issues systematically, thoughtfully and in a professionally focused manner.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit involves candidates in a significant amount of experiential learning. Candidates are required to analyse and reflect on this experience and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development. The delivery of the Unit must take account of its practical nature and of the occupational and professional backgrounds of candidates.

At the outset, candidates could be given a brief input on trend identification and analysis. They should be made aware of the requirements of the Unit, including the need to analyse and report on their experiences. Candidates should also be clear at the outset about the type of evidence they will have to provide in order to complete the Unit successfully. The evidence produced by candidates must be presented in a logical and coherent fashion and demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to each Outcome. Overall this should encompass a demonstration of:

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- ◆ the professional performance improvements that candidates have achieved as a result of participating in this learning and related practical activities
- ◆ candidates' ability to analyse individual and organisational performance before and after change and make valid conclusions from this analysis
- ◆ candidates' application of relevant tools and techniques to enhance professional effectiveness
- ◆ candidates' ability to provide a reasoned justification for their analysis, evaluation and conclusions

It is likely that delivery will consist of some initial orientation and briefing sessions after which candidates will manage their learning independently to a significant extent. However, candidates will require support and guidance throughout and suitable arrangements to provide this should be made. This could involve regular meetings with candidates both individually and as a group. Communication by other means — such as e-mail — may also be appropriate in some circumstances.

Candidates will also benefit from advice on assessment. The Unit takes a holistic approach to assessment and all four Outcomes are closely and systematically connected. Candidates can be encouraged to seek opportunities to generate evidence that would span more than one of the Outcomes. For example, aspects of identifying trends (Outcome 1) will itself inevitably involve at least some degree of evaluative filtering (Outcome 2).

There are no specific guidelines on precisely what evidence candidates should present for the Unit, but it is likely that it will include items covering both product and process, such as the following:

- ◆ a narrative describing the systematic process and various pieces of evidence together
- ◆ accounts by candidates relating to particular evidence requirements
- ◆ documentation from candidates' professional environment relating to Unit requirements
- ◆ records of interviews between candidates and their assessor
- ◆ literature reviews
- ◆ charts, logs and development plans
- ◆ process output evaluation data and analysis of that data

Candidates also have a choice in how to present their evidence. They would benefit from advice and guidance on this. If the option is taken to present evidence by means of a portfolio, the portfolio should be presented as a coherent and logical whole rather than a collection of disparate items of evidence. Essentially, the portfolio is a record of the learning journey undertaken by candidates.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Unit provides candidates with the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6, particularly in the areas of critical thinking and evaluating. Critical thinking can be developed through candidates' analysis of developing trends within their own professional fields, analysing their own professional performance needs and preparing agendas for action. Evaluating can be developed through an evaluation of the results of trend analysis to their own professional practice.

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The Unit also provides candidates with the opportunities to develop the Core Skills components of Written Communication at SCQF level 6 and Oral Communication at SCQF level 6. Written Communication can be partly developed through the use of a portfolio. Candidates will be required to read and analyse complex material, such as that related to their professional standards and the results of trend analysis. Candidates will also evaluate their own contribution to the professional development process, which may come in a written form. If candidates present their evaluation orally or through a medium such as video, audio diary, etc, then they will have the opportunity to develop Oral Communication in terms of conveying an evaluation of their learning experience in a structured way.

Working with Others may also be developed at SCQF level 6 through using problem solving and contingency planning, if opportunities to discuss these with others arise.

Open learning

This Unit requires candidates to take responsibility for their own learning. If it were to be delivered by means of open learning it would be necessary to ensure candidates had access to relevant material to enable them to assimilate the underpinning understandings and knowledge. Candidates will also need access to guidance and support throughout the learning and development process.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

General information for candidates

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In this Unit you have to achieve four Outcomes. Collectively, these Outcomes cover a selection of professional effectiveness skills associated with benchmarking and trend analysis. This involves identifying, evaluating, filtering and using trends and developments within your profession in order to enhance your professional effectiveness and results. Specifically, these skills will enable you to identify current and emerging trends from within your own professional field, using a variety of data and analytical tools appropriate to your situation. You will be able to identify key trends and themes to be addressed and will be able to evaluate the usefulness of the information gathered. You will be able to analyse the importance of current and emerging trends, establishing clear patterns and seeing the relative importance of a range of issues. You will be able to prioritise these into an agenda for effective action that can be used to apply new knowledge to your current situation. You will be able to transform this into a plan that can be implemented, taking into account contingencies and problems. You will be able to measure the effectiveness of your work and develop an agenda for future action.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that covers all four Outcomes. This evidence is likely to consist of several different types of item covering both product and process. Some examples of items of evidence you might provide are:

- ◆ a narrative linking the various pieces of evidence together
- ◆ personal reflective accounts
- ◆ witness testimony from others involved in the process
- ◆ other feedback eg from a line manager on changes in your performance
- ◆ records of interviews between you and your assessor
- ◆ products, such as trend analyses, development plans and evaluations