Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

Unit code: DV7P 36

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to improve their personal performance and interpersonal skills using of a range of established management techniques. It provides an opportunity for them to develop their existing knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through practical application of these techniques.

On completion of the Unit candidates should be able to:

1   Select, use and evaluate appropriate assertive behaviour.
2   Manage time effectively.
3   Evaluate and use principles and approaches for solving problems.

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: This Unit is about developing interpersonal skills and about how to apply tools and techniques to improve personal 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 written 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 charts, logs and plans, such as an activity log recording how candidates have spent time over a specified period.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

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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

Select, use and evaluate appropriate assertive behaviour

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Passive, assertive and aggressive behaviour
♦ Principles, benefits and challenges of assertive communication
♦ Personal assertiveness skills
♦ Strategies for implementing assertive behaviour

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

♦ explain assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour.
♦ explain the principles, benefits and challenges of assertive communication.
♦ analyse their own strengths and development needs in respect of assertiveness skills

Candidates must also demonstrate their ability to use assertive behaviour in a minimum of **three** different situations. They must show that they can:

♦ devise an appropriate strategy for dealing with each situation
♦ apply and develop at least **three** personal assertiveness skills. Candidates are **not** required to use all three skills in each situation
♦ evaluate the effectiveness of the skills and approach used, including the extent to which they demonstrated competence, confidence and openness
♦ identify further development needs in terms of the skills and approach used

Assessment guidelines

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

The assessment of this Outcome could be based on candidates' own personal or workplace situations and relationships. This may be supplemented or replaced by simulated or case study based scenarios provided by the centre.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

Appropriate methods for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of assertive behaviour include role play, verbal explanation or written description. For example:

♦ candidates might demonstrate the application of newly acquired assertiveness skills through the analysis of typical situations that they have experienced, explanations of how they managed them and how they could have done better
♦ role play evidence might consist of video supported by observer feedback and self-evaluative narrative from candidates

Outcome 2

Manage time effectively

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Personal and organisational goal setting
♦ Results focused approach to managing time
♦ Time management tools and techniques
♦ Delegation principles
♦ Interpersonal and transferable skills

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating their ability to manage their time effectively within the context of the goals of the organisation. They will show that they can:

♦ use personal and organisational goal setting to decide on personal priorities and prepare a personal plan(s) that reflects how competing priorities will be handled
♦ optimise effort by applying **two** other time management tools and techniques, which encourage a results focused approach
♦ improve their efficiency through the delegation of tasks to others
♦ apply decision making, assertiveness and other interpersonal skills to improve use of time

Assessment guidelines

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

The assessment of this Outcome could be based on candidates' own personal or workplace situations and relationships. This may be supplemented or replaced by simulated or case study based scenarios provided by the centre.

Appropriate methods for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of effective time management include role play, verbal explanation or written description. For example, candidates might demonstrate the effectiveness of their time management through evaluation of activity logs and associated action plans.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

Outcome 3

Evaluate and use principles and approaches for solving problems

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Problem solving methodologies
♦ Process and business improvement tools
♦ Problem definition and scoping
♦ Problem solving and analytical techniques
♦ Alternative solutions and best-fit solutions
♦ Problem solving as a framework for change and development

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating their ability to apply a range of principles and approaches for solving problems. They will show that they can:

♦ evaluate the appropriateness of **two** problem solving methodologies to a specific problem
♦ select and apply **one** process or business improvement tool for a specific circumstance
♦ provide a clear definition and analysis of a problem
♦ select and apply at least **three** problem solving and analytical techniques for a specific problem
♦ identify and explain at least **two** alternative solutions to a problem and justify selection of a solution as best fit
♦ explain how the best fit solution will impact on a relevant aspect of the business/organisation

Assessment guidelines

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

The assessment of this Outcome could be based on candidates' own personal or professional problems or improvement requirements. This may be supplemented or replaced by simulated or case study based scenarios provided by the centre. It may be appropriate to assess all elements of this Outcome using the same problem or scenario.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DV7P 36

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

Superclass category: AF

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal 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 personal effectiveness. It focuses specifically on a practical approach to the implementation of a range of methodologies, tools and techniques to improve personal performance.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to enhance candidates' ability to deliver results using management tools and techniques. Successful candidates will be able to use a range of options and implement and evaluate strategies for delivery of results.

'Personal Effectiveness' refers to an individual's interpersonal skills. That is, how they behave and interact with others. Sometimes these are called 'People Skills.' In essence, these are about the capacity to engage easily and respectfully with other people. The more aware and competent people are in these skills the more they are likely to be effective in both their everyday relationships and their working relationships. It is an invariable finding that effectiveness in work environments is very closely related to an individual's interpersonal skills and behaviour.

This Unit covers a selection of personal effectiveness skills associated with practical and effective management. There is a particular focus on those interpersonal skills that will enhance an individual's abilities in respect of:

♦   being appropriately assertive in different situations
♦   managing time effectively
♦   applying principles and approaches for problem solving

On successful completion of the Unit, candidates will be able to develop, maintain and promote effective relationships. They will be able to communicate effectively with a range of people in different situations, assertively challenge resistance in a range of situations and enhance personal skills through self-development. Additionally, candidates will be able to manage time effectively through prioritising activities, organising themselves and their teams accordingly, taking action to meet personal and organisational objectives and delegating tasks effectively. They will be able to address problems systematically, analysing situations, generating and screening ideas and implementing and adjusting plans.

The following notes give additional information on the knowledge and/or skills items for each of the three Outcomes.

Outcome 1

In this Outcome candidates are required to apply and develop at least **three** core assertiveness skills. These skills might be selected from the following list:

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

♦ communicate openly, calmly and honestly
♦ give and receive praise and compliments in an assertive manner
♦ make requests in a clear and direct manner
♦ refuse requests in a polite but firm manner
♦ manage complaints — apologise, accept, act
♦ manage pressure successfully
♦ handle aggressive behaviour with assertion
♦ deal with non-assertive behaviour with assertion
♦ contribute effectively to meetings
♦ chair meetings in a professional and effective manner
♦ give and receive criticism in an assertive manner
♦ negotiate mutually satisfactory outcomes to problems
♦ maintain assertiveness in face of anger
♦ give and receive feedback in an assertive manner

Outcome 2

Examples of time management tools and techniques that might be adopted for Outcome 2 include:

♦ time estimates
♦ costing of time
♦ personal digital assistant
♦ deciding on priorities
♦ activity logs
♦ action plans
♦ prioritised 'to do' lists
♦ goal setting
♦ scheduling
♦ reviews

Interpersonal and time management skills could include:

♦ decision making
♦ clarity
♦ focus
♦ assertiveness

Outcome 3

This Outcome enables candidates to evaluate and use principles and approaches for solving problems. There are several problem solving methodologies they might consider depending on the nature of a specific problem, for example:

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

♦ TRIZ
— theory of inventive problem solving which brings a scientific approach to creative thinking
— especially powerful for innovative and unique solutions

♦ RISE
— for correction problems
— a framework for problem solving based on Recognition, Investigation, Solution and Evaluation

♦ Six Sigma
— for process improvement
— bases decisions on facts and data collection, uses statistical methods

♦ Root cause analysis
— for correction problems
— incident investigation system

Problem solving for process improvement means dealing with the present where a process has not gone wrong but simply needs to be better. Of the above methodologies Six Sigma addresses the issue of process improvement very well using its DMAIC model (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control). The PDSA model (Plan, Do, Study, Act) from RISE can also be used as steps for improvement. Baselines, benchmarking and performance management systems such as the Balanced Scorecard or Business Excellence model can also be useful business improvement tools. However, the majority of processes can be easily improved using simple problem solving tools such as those listed below.

The following list provides a small sample of the many problem solving tools and analytical techniques which could be applied to a specific correction or improvement problem:

♦ pareto diagram
♦ histogram
♦ cause and effect diagram
♦ process map
♦ trend chart
♦ scatter diagram
♦ decision trees
♦ brainstorming
♦ SWOT analysis
♦ critical path analysis
♦ force field analysis

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

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 draw 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. Given this practical and experiential bias, candidates with employment experience are likely to benefit most from this Unit.

At the outset, candidates could be given a brief input on the topics of assertiveness, time management and problem solving. 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. Over and above the evidence requirements of this Unit, candidates should demonstrate that they can bring together evidence in an holistic way. This should encompass and demonstrate:

♦   the personal performance improvements that candidates have achieved as a result of participating in this learning and related practical activities
♦   that candidates can analyse and evaluate their own behaviour and performance and make valid conclusions from this
♦   that candidates can apply relevant techniques and strategies in a range of different situations
♦   that candidates can 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. Despite this, candidates will require support throughout and suitable arrangements to provide this should be made. This could involve regular meetings with candidates both individually and as a group.

Candidates will also benefit from advice on assessment. The Unit takes an holistic approach to assessment and all three Outcomes are closely related. For example, candidates can be encouraged to seek opportunities to generate evidence for all Outcomes during the process of managing a single change initiative.

There are no specific guidelines on the 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 linking the various pieces of evidence together
♦   personal reflective accounts
♦   witness testimony from others involved in the process
♦   other feedback, such as from a line manager on changes in candidates' performance
♦   records of interviews between candidates and their assessor
♦   products, such as videos, activity logs and action plans

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

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

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' personal and organisational goal setting and applying problem solving methodologies to facilitate business improvement. The evaluation can be developed throughout the Unit through evaluating both their own and others' effectiveness in undertaking professional development.

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 management techniques and problem solving methodologies. Candidates will also evaluate their own contribution to the personal 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. Candidates will also have opportunities throughout the Unit to develop Oral Communication through using assertive behaviour, which would be likely to bring about some dialogue.

Working with Others may also be developed at SCQF level 6 through using personal assertiveness skills and applying problem solving tools and techniques to solving problems. Such skills and techniques will provide opportunities for verbal interaction with others.

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

Unit title: Professional Development: Personal Effectiveness

The Unit is designed to enable you to assess and improve your own personal effectiveness and to consider how to apply lessons learned to future activities, both personally and professionally. It will enable you to improve your personal performance and interpersonal skills using of a number of established management techniques, including:

♦ Assertiveness
♦ Time management
♦ Problem solving

It will provide you with an opportunity to develop your existing knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through practical application of these techniques. In this Unit, you have to achieve three Outcomes.

Outcome 1 will enable you to identify and evaluate different types of interpersonal behaviour and behave assertively in response to these. You will be able to make use of these skills in negotiations with others and apply them, along with other effective communication techniques, to project a competent, open and confident image.

Outcome 2 will enable you to use time management techniques to decide on personal priorities and prepare personal plans within the context of the goals of your organisation. In this you will be supported by skills in goal setting, delegation and decision making.

Outcome 3 will enable you to define, analyse and evaluate problems and select suitable problem solving methodologies, tools and techniques for particular problems. Related to this, you will be able to identify business improvement tools for specific circumstances and plan their implementation.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that covers all three 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 videos, activity logs and action plans