Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Unit code: DV7R 36

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills required to manage a project from its conception through to its controlled closure. The project will be conceived, designed, delivered and evaluated by candidates on behalf of a key stakeholder. The stakeholder will not only be a primary beneficiary of the project, but also a senior professional influential in the personal and professional prospects of candidates and who will act as a mentor for candidates during project development and delivery. The skills acquired will enable candidates to manage and control project resources including project relationships and budgets within the context of efficient management of risk and change.

This Unit is intended for individuals working in the public, private or voluntary sectors. They will be experienced in their field of operation but may be without any formal project management qualifications. This Unit will enable candidates to manage the planning, implementation, closure and evaluation of a stakeholder project.

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

1   Prepare a business case for a project.
2   Develop and control a project plan.
3   Manage the implementation of a project.
4   Critically evaluate and close a project.

Credit points and level: 4 HN Credits at SCQF level 9: (32 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 have knowledge of financial management sufficient to meet the requirements of this Unit. They should be able to use these skills to give an account of their experiences, reflect on them, make valid conclusions and express both personal and organisational strengths and development needs.

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

General information for centres (cont)

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.

Assessment: The knowledge and skills elements of this Unit are predominantly practical and workplace based. It is intended that the Outcomes be assessed by means of the development of project management documentation, covering all the requirements of the four Outcomes, for a real project for which candidates have been given responsibility.

It is likely that this documentation will form part of a wider portfolio that 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 would also include project documentation such as project plans, checklists, budgets, monitoring data, quality reviews and evaluation reports.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Unit code: DV7R 36

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

Prepare a business case for a project

Knowledge and/or skills

♦   Project context
♦   Rationale
♦   Scope and objectives of a project
♦   Financial viability

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills outlined above by demonstrating their ability to document the justification for the undertaking of a project. This will be based on the estimated cost of development and implementation against the risks, anticipated business benefits and savings to be gained. For a proposed project, candidates will prepare a business case that will:

♦   explain at least **one** relevant project context — political, business, economic, programme
♦   provide a rationale for a project
♦   explain the scope and objectives of a project
♦   evaluate the financial viability of a project through the application of a process of options appraisal:
    —   define appraisal criteria
    —   apply estimating and forecasting techniques
    —   analyse data for several options
    —   justify the choice of a preferred option based on funding sources, comparative costs, budgets, benefits and risk ratings
    —   measure efficiency by analysing project affordability and value for money

Evidence must be generated from a real-life situation. This may be through the workplace or other relevant activity. Tutors/assessors should ensure that the project chosen should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the Outcomes of the Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Outcome 2

Develop and control a project plan

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Planning tools and techniques
♦ Elements of a project plan
♦ Different types and levels of plan
♦ Monitoring and controlling of a plan

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating their ability to develop and control all plans relating to a project. Candidates will show that they can:

♦ evaluate at least **three** planning tools and at least **three** planning techniques for their project
♦ apply at least **two** planning techniques and at least **two** planning tools to the development of a project plan
♦ incorporate **all** relevant elements in a plan. These must include:
　— control points
　— products
　— dependencies
　— activities
　— resources
　— timescales
♦ develop a project plan that encompasses at least **two** other types and levels of plan from the following:
　— programme plan
　— project plan
　— stage plan
　— exception plan
　— contingency plan
　— team plan
　— communication plan
♦ set a baseline, monitor and revise a plan

Evidence must be generated from a real-life situation. This may be through the workplace or other relevant activity. Tutors/assessors should ensure that the project chosen should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the Outcomes of the Unit.

Outcome 3

Manage the implementation of a project

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Project roles and responsibilities
♦ Partnership working and stakeholder management
♦ Budget profiling
♦ Risk and issue management
♦ Quality management

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating their ability to manage and control project relationships and budgets within the context of efficient management of risk, change and quality. They will show that they can:

♦ establish an effective structure in terms of project roles and responsibilities to provide direction, management, control and communication
♦ analyse customer, supplier and user interests and define contractual arrangements, key roles and responsibilities and communication requirements through partnership working and stakeholder management
♦ apply budget profiling techniques to produce forecasted and actual project budgets, including financial monitoring reports for the lifetime of the project
♦ produce project documentation to manage issues, risks and changes in a consistent manner through the use of project documentation, including supporting logs and monitoring reports
♦ select and implement a quality management process that incorporates quality assurance, quality control and quality planning to ensure that the quality expected by the customer is achieved

Evidence must be generated from a real-life situation. This may be through the workplace or other relevant activity. Tutors/assessors should ensure that the project chosen should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the Outcomes of the Unit.

Outcome 4

Critically evaluate and close a project

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Project evaluation
♦ Decommission a project
♦ Lessons learned
♦ Follow on actions and recommendations
♦ Post project review
♦ Archiving of project files

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all knowledge and/or skills above by demonstrating the ability to conduct an effective evaluation and the controlled and formal closure of a project. Candidates should prepare an end-of-project evaluation report, which should include:

♦   an evaluation of the results of a project against original objectives
♦   an explanation of how a project was decommissioned to ensure that all products from a project had been delivered and accepted and that all stakeholders had been informed of project closure
♦   an analysis of lessons learned from a project
♦   an explanation of any follow-on actions and recommendations for further development
♦   the development of a plan for a post project review

In addition to the above report, candidates will:

♦   select, secure and archive useful project files and provide a justification for the purpose and relevance of retaining selected files

Evidence must be generated from a real-life situation. This may be through the workplace or other relevant activity. Tutors/assessors should ensure that the project chosen should be able to generate sufficient evidence to meet the Outcomes of the Unit.

Assessment guidelines for the Unit

It is recommended that this evidence should form part of an ongoing portfolio. The portfolio entries should satisfy the evidence requirements for all Outcomes of this Unit.

The assessment for this Unit should be based on a real life situation project for which candidates have responsibility. Selection of a suitable project should be made in consultation with candidates' assessor/line manager/tutor. Suitability of the project for assessment purposes will be determined by the centre. Candidates should use the same project for all Unit Outcomes.

The project must be appropriate to the development of skills at SCQF level 9. This means that the project has to generate evidence that allows candidates to display an appropriate level of management of their own and others' work. This should also provide opportunities for them to synthesis their knowledge, skills and experience across their professional field. The project must also be of sufficient length to enable ongoing monitoring, revision, risk management and changes to be evidenced.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DV7R 36

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Superclass category: AG

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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: Managing a Project for an Organisation

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 160 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 and professional effectiveness and enterprise skills. They will be experienced in their field of operation, but may be without any formal project management qualifications. It is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills required to manage the planning, implementation, closure and evaluation of a stakeholder project from its conception through to controlled closure. The project will be conceived, designed, delivered and evaluated on behalf of a key stakeholder. The stakeholder will not only be a primary beneficiary of the project, but also a senior professional influential in the personal and professional prospects of candidates and who should act as a mentor for candidates during project development and delivery. The resultant skills will enable candidates to manage and control project resources including project relationships and the budget within the context of efficient management of risk and change.

The Unit has been designed to be compatible with practices that demonstrate good corporate governance and the government's best practice guidelines. In this context, it is expected that support materials be compatible with the HM Treasury's Green Book guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation and reference the Gateway Review system, or similar, to evaluate project progress. Candidates may be encouraged to access the wide range of project management tools and guidance available through the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) website.

The Unit provides an holistic approach to the application of personal and professional capability, perhaps within a complex environment, where variables are manifold and not all data is available. By the end of the Unit, candidates will have completed a project for a stakeholder, achieving benefits of importance to the stakeholder, themselves and their organisation. The outcomes of the work will demonstrate candidates' capability to identify variable issues arising occupationally and professionally and apply their learning at a high level to the achievement of results in uncertain situations. The work should be characterised by elements such as appraisal of complex situations, analysis and evaluation of issues, determination of appropriate courses of action and achievement of results, in accordance with the learning Outcomes.

Candidates will understand the key issues involved in planning and delivering projects to achieve results. They will have developed a deeper knowledge of their own professional areas and be able to set objectives and terms of reference based on key priorities and drivers. They will understand the key principles of project planning and the influencing skills necessary to sell their ideas and concepts to significant individuals and groups.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

They will be able to establish detailed success measures, clarify project definitions and scope and set and gain approval for project plans. Candidates will understand the processes involved in resource allocation to achieve objectives and will be able to coordinate them with activities within the framework of a project plan. They will be able to evaluate progress and keep key people informed of it and will be able to remedy problems that arise in project implementation. Candidates will understand the processes and problems arising from closing projects and will be able to do so efficiently. They will be able to evaluate the success of project delivery and the results that have been produced and will be able to communicate these to stakeholders and others.

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

Outcome 1

The HM Treasury's Green Book guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation provides a useful reference for this Outcome. The financial estimating and forecasting techniques adopted within this Outcome will also be applicable to other Outcomes within this Unit.

The business case provides a baseline for a project and will be regularly reviewed throughout a project. It is a key document providing some of the information essential to project definition or initiation.

Outcome 2

Effective project management relies on an effective planning and control process. Planning is an iterative process, commencing with an initial outline plan at the definition or initiation phase and applied throughout the running of a project.

Demonstration of practical project planning will encompass development of a range of different types and levels of plan which might include programme plan, project plan, stage plan, exception plan, contingency plan, team plan, quality plan and communications plan.

As an aid to planning, candidates might make use of a range of tools and techniques. They might adopt a selection from the examples listed below.

Planning techniques:

- estimating
- scheduling
- defining and analysing products
- product based planning
- identifying activities and dependencies
- allocating time to activities
- analysing risks
- critical path analysis

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Planning tools:

♦ process description
♦ product breakdown structure
♦ dependency network diagram
♦ Gantt chart
♦ risk log
♦ skills matrix
♦ software tools such as MS Project

Candidates will be expected to provide comprehensive plans making maximum use of charts, tables, diagrams and supporting text for clarity. Plans will include key elements relevant to the stakeholder project, for example:

♦ products
♦ prerequisites
♦ quality requirements
♦ assumptions
♦ activities
♦ dependencies
♦ resources
♦ risks
♦ control points
♦ tolerances
♦ timescales

Outcome 3

To help manage the project and maintain effective project communications, candidates might create:

♦ a stakeholder map to identify key stakeholders and their project involvement
♦ a framework for project communications presented as a mapping of stakeholders against the channel of communication, indicating regularity, who to and who from

To demonstrate the required knowledge and skills in relation to budget profiling, candidates should apply techniques such as estimating, forecasting, scheduling, tracking and reporting to resource management and project stages.

For this Outcome, it is expected that candidates will produce the following documents at the end of each reporting period (eg monthly) as part of the evidence submission:

♦ revised budget including project income, expenditure and budget variations
♦ risk log and summary report on risk status to demonstrate the assessment, monitoring and reporting on risk
♦ issue log to manage and control changes and incidents in a consistent manner

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Candidates will be expected to implement a Quality Management process, which must include Quality Assurance, Quality Control and Quality Planning. Candidates can select an existing process, adapt an existing process, or design a new process.

Outcome 4

Although listed under knowledge and skills for Outcome 4, project evaluation should be introduced at an early stage in the Unit in order that candidates appreciate that evaluation is a process that commences at the start of a project and continues until closure or beyond. It is not a one-off activity that only applies after a project has delivered its outputs. Evaluation should apply to both process and product and incorporate quantitative and qualitative data gathered throughout a project.

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. Given this practical and experiential bias, candidates in current employment are likely to benefit most from this Unit.

At the outset, candidates could be given a brief input on an appropriate project management methodology and associated tools and techniques. 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:

♦   the professional performance improvements that candidates have achieved as a result of managing a stakeholder project
♦   candidates' ability to analyse individual and organisational performance before and after change, to analyse comparative data and make valid conclusions from this analysis
♦   candidates' application of relevant project management tools and techniques
♦   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 to a significant extent. However, candidates will require support and guidance throughout (particularly if they have not previously undertaken training in project development and project management) and suitable arrangements to provide this should be made. This could involve regular meetings with candidates both individually and as part of a group. Communication by other means, such as e-mail, may also be appropriate in some circumstances.

The choice of project management methodology, eg PRINCE2, DSDM, adopted for use in this Unit is at the discretion of the centre.   However, the project management processes and techniques taught within this Unit should provide a robust and practical approach for managing and controlling projects and be appropriate for the level of management and control required.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

The four Outcomes in this Unit lead candidates through an iterative set of processes from the controlled start-up of a project through to controlled closure. Although the specific tools and terminology used will be determined by the project management methodology adopted, the principles will be the same. The knowledge and skills elements of the Units should be delivered in the context of the chosen methodology using an integrated approach to content coverage as appropriate. For example, Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 all contribute to the definition or initiation of a project. Also, all elements of Outcomes 2 and 3 are essential for the ongoing running of a project.

As candidates are expected to be in employment, so it is recommended that a suitable project be selected at their place of work that can be used as the basis of development and assessment for all four Outcomes. The same project should be used throughout the Unit to progress project management knowledge and skills through all of the Outcomes within the Unit. Selection of a workplace project should be made in consultation with candidates' line manager and tutor. Suitability of the project for assessment purposes will be determined by the centre.

The Unit takes an 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, it would be appropriate to consider cross-assessment of those dynamic elements of Outcomes 2 and 3 which are revisited throughout a project.

There are no hard and fast 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 linking the various pieces of evidence together
♦   accounts by candidates relating to particular evidence requirements
♦   records of interviews between candidates and their assessor
♦   a synopsis of project progress, for example:
   — a narrative of initial thinking behind selection of the stakeholder and project topic
   — establishment of project terms of reference and objectives
   — project planning and the thinking behind it
   — setting of measurements of performance
   — project rollout, including commentaries on problems and changes to plans
   — project closure
   — evaluations of both project delivery and results
   — conclusions relating to further work and research required

For the evidence produced, indicators of success should include:

♦   knowledge of project planning, delivery and evaluation against stakeholder requirements
♦   an ability to progress the project over a prolonged period of time
♦   an ability to meet project milestones and deadlines
♦   achievement of project closure
♦   achievement of results for stakeholders and self
♦   an evaluation of results

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

Candidates may present their 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 developing a project rationale, planning the various stages of the project, managing issues, risks and changes, and managing its implementation. The evaluation can be developed through candidates providing an evaluation of financial viability, evaluating the results of the project and the lessons learned, along with recommending actions for further 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 project management, budgeting, and developing a Quality Management process. Candidates will also evaluate their own contribution to the development of the project, 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 seeking and responding to feedback from others, including their project mentor, and potentially making a verbal presentation to accompany submission of the project.

Components of Information Technology at SCQF level 6 may be developed through using ICT systems and packages to develop project plans, carry out financial viability tasks, budget profiling and archiving project files, including ensuring the security of such information.

Numeracy may be developed at SCQF level 6 through carrying out financial viability tasks and budget profiling.

Working with Others may also be developed at SCQF level 6 through using developing relationships with a key stakeholder, interacting with the project mentor and presentation of the project to the stakeholder. This would also involve an evaluation of candidates' personal contribution to the communication process.

Open learning

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

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: Managing a Project for an Organisation

It would be appropriate for your centre to provide you with further input in developing your knowledge and/or skills if you have not already undertaken training in project development and project management.

This Unit is designed to provide you with the knowledge and skills required to manage the planning, implementation, closure and evaluation of a stakeholder project from its conception through to controlled closure. The project will be conceived, designed, delivered and evaluated by you on behalf of a key stakeholder. The stakeholder will not only be a primary beneficiary of the project, but also a senior professional influential in your personal and professional prospects and who will act as your mentor during project development and delivery. The resultant skills will enable you to manage and control project resources including project relationships and budgets within the context of efficient management of risk and change.

In this Unit you have to achieve four Outcomes. Collectively, these Outcomes cover the knowledge and skills required to manage a project throughout its lifetime. The Unit provides an holistic approach to the application of your personal and professional capability, perhaps within a complex environment where variables are manifold and not all data is available. By the end of the Unit, you will have completed a project for a stakeholder, achieving benefits of importance to the stakeholder, yourself and your organisation. Your work on the project will demonstrate your capability to identify variable issues arising occupationally and professionally and apply your learning at a high level to the achievement of results in uncertain situations. The work should be characterised by elements such as appraisal of complex situations, analysis and evaluation of issues, determination of appropriate courses of action and achievement of results, in accordance with the learning Outcomes.

On successful completion of the Unit, you will understand the key issues involved in planning and delivering a project to achieve results. You will have developed a deeper knowledge of your own professional area and be able to set objectives and terms of reference based on key priorities and drivers. You will understand the key principles of project planning and the influencing skills necessary to sell your ideas and concepts to key individuals and groups. You will be able to establish detailed success measures, clarify project definitions and scope and set and gain approval for project plans. You will understand the processes involved in resource allocation to achieve objectives and will be able to coordinate them with activities within the framework of a project plan. You will be able to evaluate progress and keep key people informed of it and will be able to remedy problems that arise in project implementation. You will understand the processes and problems arising from closing projects and will be able to do so efficiently. You will be able to evaluate the success of project delivery and the results that have been produced, and will be able to communicate these to stakeholders and others.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence of your project management knowledge and skills by demonstrating analysis of the issues within the project and development of recommendations through evidence and experience, in a style appropriate to the requirements of the work and learning level.

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:

General information for candidates (cont)

Unit title: Managing a Project for an Organisation

- ♦ a narrative describing the systematic process and linking the various pieces of evidence together
- ♦ accounts relating to particular evidence requirements
- ♦ records of interviews between you and your assessor
- ♦ synopsis of project progress, for example:
  - — a narrative of initial thinking behind selection of the stakeholder and project topic
  - — establishment of project terms of reference and objectives
  - — project planning and the thinking behind it
  - — setting of measurements of performance
  - — project rollout, including commentaries on problems and changes to plans
  - — project closure
  - — evaluations of both project delivery and results
  - — conclusions relating to further work and research required

For the evidence produced, indicators of your success will include:

- ♦ knowledge of project planning, delivery and evaluation against stakeholder requirements
- ♦ ability to progress project over a prolonged period of time
- ♦ ability to meet project milestones and deadlines
- ♦ achievement of project closure
- ♦ achievement of results for stakeholders and self
- ♦ evaluation of results