



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

Unit code: H1XJ 34

Superclass: GE

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the concept and practice of continuing professional development. It will provide the knowledge and skills that will enable them to be proactive in relation to managing their own development more effectively.

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

- 1 Analyse the main principles and concepts in relation to Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- 2 Create an action plan for personal improvement and development opportunities.
- 3 Implement and evaluate agreed CPD activities.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5) or similar qualifications or experience. It is also recommended that candidates have undertaken the HN Unit: *IT in Business — Word-processing, Spreadsheets and Databases: An Introduction* or equivalent, or have relevant experience, prior to undertaking this Unit.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

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 assessment exemplar for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

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.

Outcome 1

Analyse the main principles and concepts in relation to Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Development of CPD
- ◆ Principles of CPD
- ◆ Stakeholders involved in CPD
- ◆ Benefits of CPD

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the nature and development of the concept of CPD
- ◆ describe the role(s) of the various stakeholders in CPD
- ◆ analyse the benefits and drawbacks of CPD

Outcome 2

Create an action plan for personal improvement and development opportunities.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Planning for CPD
- ◆ Skills and techniques for CPD practice
- ◆ Learning strategies for implementing CPD
- ◆ Methods of recording CPD action plans and development records

Evidence Requirements

Evidence Requirements for this Outcome can be found immediately after the Knowledge and/or Skills section in Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

Outcome 3

Implement and evaluate agreed CPD activities.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Implementing CPD
- ◆ Recording CPD
- ◆ Evaluating CPD

Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 2 and 3

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Identify and assess their development needs
- ◆ Provide an appropriate plan for identified development needs and keep appropriate records
- ◆ Evaluate templates for planning and recording CPD and select one that facilitates the recording of CPD evidence
- ◆ Submit a completed development record and a self-evaluation report

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

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

This Unit is primarily concerned with equipping candidates with a basic understanding of the main elements of CPD. This includes providing the opportunity to put such principles into practice by developing a CPD plan and maintaining a record of CPD activity to demonstrate the Continuous Professional Development process. Keeping a CPD record will develop essential transferable skills and is often a requirement of various professional bodies, for example the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

The emphasis of the Unit should be on giving candidates the required knowledge and skills to deal with both the content and the process involved in CPD. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), CPD should:

- ◆ be continuous — professionals should always be looking for ways to improve performance
- ◆ be the responsibility of the individual learner to own and manage
- ◆ be driven by the learning needs and development of the individual
- ◆ be evaluative rather than descriptive of what has taken place
- ◆ be an essential component of professional and personal life, never an optional extra

The following CIPD text would be helpful in the context of preparing candidates to complete this Unit.

Title: *Continuing Professional Development*

Authors: David Megginson & Vivian Whitaker

Publishers: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Outcome 1 introduces the concept of CPD and the theoretical underpinning of the Unit with a brief introduction to learning and development theory, including: the learning process, Kolb's theory of experiential learning, Honey and Mumford's learning styles, potential barriers to learning, strategies for learning, stakeholders involved in the learning process, and the benefits of continuous learning.

Outcome 2 introduces the candidate to the practical skills and knowledge required to undertake effective planning for CPD. This includes: analytical and intuitive/creative thinking using various management tools and techniques such as: creative problem solving, SWOT analysis, the planning process, planning techniques, decision making — evaluating strategies, SMART objectives — goal setting theory, time management. Candidates will be required to evaluate template CPD plans and records and select an appropriate format for recording their CPD. This Outcome also looks at behavioural issues such as: managing self and managing others.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

In Outcome 3 candidates actively carry out the agreed activities over a period of not less than six months. They record their activities in CPD record and then evaluate how they progressed in carrying out the activities

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit is designed to be practical in nature and, as such, the keeping of an accurate CPD record will be an important part of the assessment evidence. It is important to stress the need for candidates to demonstrate the necessary process skills, and understanding of the appropriate concepts required to complete the Unit. Such process skills and concepts could also be assessed in the written evidence. The following skills are not intended to be exhaustive but are indicative of what is expected of candidates to keep up their knowledge and skills related to their professional lives whilst maintaining a CPD record:

- ◆ Time management — diary of what was done and when, including target dates and deadlines
- ◆ Managing self — an invaluable personal record of progress through planning and organising self
- ◆ Problem solving — identify potential problems and possible solutions
- ◆ Research — sources consulted or intend to consult
- ◆ Communication — improve writing skills and record CPD evidence
- ◆ Managing Others — names and contact details of relevant people and expectations of them

It is recommended that the CPD plan and/or record should be electronically stored to facilitate the ease of production, and allowing the candidates to use their IT skills.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Although the three Outcomes are closely connected in this Unit, they are sufficiently different to allow an individual assessment for Outcome 1 and a combined assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3. Outcome 1 provides the underpinning knowledge and skills required for candidates to complete the practical aspect of maintaining a CPD plan with implementation and evaluation within Outcomes 2 and 3. Candidates will be able to gather evidence throughout delivery of the Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Assessment could be carried out through a set of questions requiring short responses which explain the main principles and concepts of CPD.

Outcomes 2 and 3

It is possible to have a combined assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 using a practical assignment through compilation of a CPD plan and record to produce the Evidence Requirements. Centres should provide a suitable template for the CPD record and plan for candidates. This can be in either electronic or hard copy, preferably electronic. The candidate should then search for other templates or utilise an organisational example. The chosen template should allow for an introductory section that includes a plan for development and self analysis of the level of CPD required.

It is suggested that candidates carry out a diagnosis of their current status in regard to their CPD through the use of a SWOT analysis. CPD actions should be framed as SMART objectives. It is reasonable to expect Centres to provide appropriate templates for this part of the assessment.

There should also be a short evaluation report to provide evidence of review and feedback for the reflective element of Outcome 3.

Online and Distance Learning

There are considerable opportunities for Online and Distance Learning and Assessment of this Unit.

It is possible to co-ordinate a learning and teaching/assessment programme through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which would allow geographically dispersed candidates to initiate, develop and maintain contact with each other.

Centres which wish to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)* or latest issue if this version is superseded.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Candidates are able to develop Core Skills in this Unit at SCQF level 6 as noted below.

Communication: Reading, Written and Oral

The Unit provides candidates with the opportunity to develop all three components of the Communication Core Skill. In Outcome 1, candidates will be introduced to the concept of CPD and the theory underpinning of the Unit. This will involve reading and understanding complex information. Outcome 2 provides candidates the opportunity of completion, analysis and evaluation of a CPD plan and record. This provides underpinning knowledge by reading complex information on a suitable format and presentation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). For all Outcomes, the completion of the plan and record develops written communications for identifying and recording the complex issue of CPD. Oral communication could be developed in all Outcomes through group discussions which will analyse and evaluate related information on CPD.

Information and Communication Technology

ICT skills could be developed in Outcome 1 through internet research on the historical and current issues and events related to CPD. Outcome 3 develops the use of the presentation, storage and security of electronic data which provides essential underpinning knowledge for the relevance of the legal requirements involved in data protection.

Working with Others

All elements of this Core Skill are reflected in this Unit. An analytical and evaluative approach to working with a range of others in an organisation will be reflected in whole class group work activities.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Continuing Professional Development: Introduction

This Unit is designed to enable you to plan, organise, and implement a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme. Continuing Professional Development will be an integral part of your career development and provides an excellent platform for life-long learning. The majority of employers insist that you have a CPD plan and this Unit provides you with the opportunity to do just that. It will allow you to consider issues such as:

- ◆ Recognise the need for lifelong learning
- ◆ Establish a systematic approach to 'lifelong learning'
- ◆ Become a better learner
- ◆ Recognise how to develop through identifying learning opportunities
- ◆ Manage your own development more effectively
- ◆ Develop the ability to reflect on what you have experienced