



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

**Unit code:** H2XC 34

**Superclass:** PL

**Publication date:** November 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed for trade union health and safety representatives who are new to the role or may have not undertaken this level of training in the subject. In this Unit candidates will develop their knowledge and understanding of the trade union worker-centred approach to occupational health, safety and welfare.

This is a specialist mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and is also one of the three Units that comprise the Professional Development Award in Trade Union Organising for Health and Safety at SCQF level 7. It can also be delivered as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development.

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

- 1 Explain the role and rights of a trade union health and safety representative.
- 2 Analyse issues and problems in the workplace relation to health, safety and welfare.
- 3 Develop a plan that demonstrates a trade union worker-centred approach to health, safety and welfare.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Although entry is at the discretion of the centre, it is recommended that candidates possess good communication and interpersonal skills. In addition, candidates should be able to demonstrate the support of their nominating union. It would be beneficial if the candidate had undertaken some previous trade union or health and safety training.

## **General information (cont)**

### **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.*

### **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.

This Unit is designed to provide trade union representatives with knowledge and understanding of the trade union worker-centred approach to occupational health, safety and welfare.

This is a specialist mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and is also one of the three Units that comprise the Professional Development Award in Trade Union Organising for Health and Safety. It can also be delivered as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development.

It is recommended that it be delivered as part of a trade union's education programme.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

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The section 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

Explain the role and rights of a trade union health and safety representative.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Tasks associated with the role of a trade union health and safety representative.
- ◆ Current relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- ◆ Trade union recognition, facilities and related agreements.
- ◆ Trade union roles, structures, rules and policies.
- ◆ Role of the trade union health and safety representative in the risk assessment process

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe tasks associated with the role of a trade union health and safety representative
- ◆ explain the rights of the trade union health and safety representative in relation to practice
- ◆ explain their own and others' roles in relation to trade union structures
- ◆ explain how trade union structures can be used to influence policy
- ◆ explain the role of the trade union health and safety representative in the risk assessment process

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

### Outcome 2

Analyse issues and problems in the workplace in relation to health, safety and welfare.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Workplace health, safety and welfare issues and problems.
- ◆ Effect of gender inequality to women's occupational health and safety.
- ◆ Effectiveness of workplace health and safety arrangements.
- ◆ Cause of accidents and ill-health.
- ◆ Relevant prevention and control measures.
- ◆ Workplace inspection process.
- ◆ Systematic approach to workplace inspections.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify the main hazards and health, safety and welfare issues and problems at work
- ◆ explain how gender inequality can affect women's occupational health and safety and provide examples of gender-specific health and safety problems
- ◆ analyse the effectiveness of workplace health and safety arrangements
- ◆ analyse the causes of an accident or ill-health incident
- ◆ recommend appropriate prevention and/ or control measures in relation to an accident or ill-health incident
- ◆ describe their approach to workplace inspections

### Outcome 3

Develop a plan that demonstrates a trade union worker-centred approach to health, safety and welfare.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Trade union worker-centred approach to health, safety and welfare.
- ◆ Relationship between occupational health and safety and well-being.
- ◆ Methods of improving health, safety and well-being at work.
- ◆ Workforce involvement methods and techniques.
- ◆ Workplace health and safety information and communication methods.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ develop a plan that demonstrates the trade union worker-centred approach with regard to a minimum of three health, safety and welfare at work issues
- ◆ provide examples from workplace practice which demonstrate the relationship between occupational health and safety and well-being.
- ◆ recommend methods of improving health, safety and well-being at work
- ◆ produce one example of a method or technique designed to involve the workforce in promoting health, safety and wellbeing
- ◆ evaluate the effectiveness of current health and safety information and communication methods in the workplace

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

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 is a specialist mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and is also one of the three units that comprise the Professional Development Award in Trade Union Organising For Health and Safety. It can also be delivered as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development. It is intended for Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives.

Trade union health and safety representatives require to develop their knowledge and understanding of the trade union worker-centred approach to health and safety in order that they may contribute effectively to efforts to defend and improve working conditions. This Unit is intended to provide a contextualised introduction to the subject and its practical application.

### **Guidance on the delivery of this Unit**

It is envisaged that initial delivery will be as part of the relevant specialist PDA and that candidates will progress to further Units of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation.

Candidates will be practising trade union health and safety representatives active in the workplace. Course participants are likely to attend in groups drawn either from a single workplace or sector or from a variety of workplaces and sectors. Courses incorporating this unit are therefore best delivered in short blocks or via day release, attended by cohorts of between 10 and 20 participants. The tutor should be an experienced trade unionist with knowledge and understanding of trade union structures, policy and practice as well as experience of the trade union worker-centred approach to health and safety.

Participant-centred, co-operative group work is highly recommended. Candidates will bring a range of valuable existing knowledge and experience, whether from trade union involvement, work, previous study or life in general and it is important to promote exchange of knowledge, experience and views in a mutually respectful, mutually supportive environment. Guidelines for working together should be agreed from the outset.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

By the end of Outcome 1 candidates should be able to explain the role and rights of a trade union health and safety representative. Paired introductions might act as a useful first exchange of information about tasks associated with the role. Course participants could interview each other about their own experiences and what they do as health and safety representatives as well as their aims for the course. They could subsequently list some of the actions that they or work colleagues have taken as health and safety representatives, noting issues they tackled, what they did and who else was involved, as a precursor to group discussion on the role and functions of the health and safety representative.

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations contain important information on the functions and rights of the health and safety representative. One way of furthering knowledge and understanding would be to invite participants to work in groups to devise responses to case study examples of the sorts of misunderstandings that can arise in the workplace in respect of the right to be consulted; the right to investigate health and safety matters; the right to inspect; the right to receive information, including any risk assessments and the right to take paid time off to perform their functions and undergo training. Copies of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations should be provided as a resource and reference made to the relevant Regulation, section of the Code of Practice and/ or Guidance Notes.

Candidates should also be able to explain their own and others' roles in relation to trade union structures and know how these structures can be used to influence policy. Participants might therefore benefit from exchanging information on their own involvement with their trade union branch, other representatives, trade union committees and trade union conferences. This could be followed by discussion of trade union structures and consideration of how they might be used by participants to influence trade union policy.

It might also be helpful to review how trade union health and safety representatives are appointed. Participants could discuss their own appointment and compare experiences of the system for election/appointment of health and safety representatives, credentials, induction and training and length of appointment.

Outcome 1 should also cover the role of safety representative in the risk assessment process. It is important that participants understand that it is the employer's responsibility to carry out risk assessments but that they themselves have clear rights and can play an important part in ensuring that risk assessments are done properly. Drawing attention to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and to trade union materials and handbooks on the subject could help further clarify these rights. Participants might then benefit from working in groups to begin to consider their own role in the risk assessment process. These discussions could include how they might exercise their rights to check their employers' risk assessments and plans for risk prevention and control and how they might collect workers' opinions on hazards.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

By the end of Outcome 2, participants should be able to analyse issues and problems in the workplace in relation to health, safety and welfare. Group discussion might help them to identify the main health and safety issues and problems at work. Participants should be reminded here to focus not only on the most apparent hazards, eg slips, trips, falls, working at height, poor lighting, working with chemicals and so on but also on the way work is organised in terms of pace, intensity, hours of work and shift patterns and the employer's attitude and approach to ensuring the ongoing welfare of employees.

Delivery of this outcome should help participants to develop knowledge and understanding of how gender inequality can affect women's occupational health and safety and enable them to provide examples of gender-specific health and safety problems. Participants could be encouraged to share knowledge and experience of the particular health and safety problems faced by women members at work and discuss how gender inequality both inside and outside work affects women's occupational safety. Information could be provided on trade union policy on the subject and participants could work together to prepare a case for improving women's occupational health and safety in the workplaces using trade union resources such as the TUC Gender and Occupational Safety and Health Gender Sensitive Checklist.

Participants should be given opportunities to consider the effectiveness of workplace health and safety arrangements. They could compare their own employer's health and safety policy to a checklist of what should be covered and identify any problems or improvements that need to be made. They might compare their workplace safety committees to the functions of the safety committee under the SRSC Regulations, identify any deficiencies and make recommendations for improvement. They could work in pairs to conduct an audit of workplace practices, covering whether there are sufficient safety representatives; whether safety representatives are afforded the full range of time and facilities to which they are legally entitled; arrangements for paid time off for training; whether safety representatives inspect the workplace regularly and at least every three months and more frequently in the case of high risk occupations or workplaces that change regularly; whether members report problems to safety representatives and to management as a matter of course; use of hazard or inspection reporting procedures; whether management consult safety representatives in good time before making decisions which might impact upon health and safety; access to information including risk assessments, safety policy, risk management procedures and HSE publications and so on.

Outcome 2 includes equipping participants to analyse the causes of an accident or ill-health incident and recommend appropriate prevention or control measures. Participants might therefore benefit from working together in groups to discuss and analyse both the immediate and underlying causes of a real accident or incident from one of their own workplaces or a case study example and share ideas and opinions in respect of measures that could prevent or reduce the risks of injury or ill-health in the future. The Health and Safety Executive's 'Investigating Accidents and Incidents' might be a useful resource.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

It is important that participants know how to adopt a systematic approach to inspections. Delivery of Outcome 2 should therefore help them clarify the preparations they would need to make prior to inspecting the workplace (eg in terms of planning, workplace layout, time required, etc); the facilities and information they would need; what they would do during the inspection; how they would involve members; what they should do following the inspection; what difficulties they might anticipate and the approach they could take to ensure that the employer provided adequate facilities, information and assistance.

Participants should be encouraged to analyse any problems with inspections in greater detail, for example where they report that no inspections are conducted or are conducted infrequently, members are not consulted before, during or after inspections or health and safety representatives are unable to secure enough time off. This might be a good point to discuss the systematic approach to problem solving, ie where a problem is analysed and all relevant information gathered and taken into account prior to development and implementation of a plan of action. Worksheets on this might help participants develop their understanding of how to use this sort of approach in tackling problems with inspections.

By the end of Outcome 3, candidates should be able to apply a trade union worker-centred approach to health, safety and welfare and recommend ways of improving occupational health, safety and well-being. This approach involves awareness of how the management, planning, organisation and control of the work process may contribute to health and safety problems. Participants should therefore be encouraged to consider whether their management are health and safety conscious and pro-active in the area of health and safety, whether members' health and safety problems are dealt with fairly and effectively and whether health and safety education and training are an ongoing priority at work. In order to help them develop a worker-centred approach, participants could consider and prepare responses in groups to a number of statements, such as 'When things go wrong it is usually the fault of careless, apathetic workers'; 'Costs are always an obstacle to securing improvements in health and safety'; and 'Dealing with health and safety is a matter of common sense'. They might then move on to tackle case study scenarios designed to further highlight the trade union worker-centred approach.

They should also be able to provide examples which demonstrate the relationship between occupational health and safety and well-being. It might be useful to provide trade union materials on this subject along with the International Labour Organisation and World Health Organisation definitions of health, safety and well-being. Participants could consider what works well and does not work well in their workplaces in respect of these definitions, taking into account what people do, how they do it, the controls and precautions in place, how work is organised, how employees and managers interact, the existence of family friendly policies and how health and safety representatives are involved in representing the views of the membership. They should then be in a good position to develop concrete proposals for improving health, safety and well-being at work.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

Outcome 3 should reflect that involving the workforce is a central aspect of the trade union approach. Examples of methods or techniques designed to involve the workforce in promoting a positive health and safety culture might include a health and safety survey questionnaire for the membership; a workplace hazards map using hazard mapping techniques; a leaflet, poster, electronic communication or a short presentation intended to raise awareness of trade union activities at work in the field of health and safety.

By the end of Outcome 3 candidates should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of current health and safety information and communication methods in the workplace. Participants could work together in groups to list, compare and consider the benefits of the different ways that members are currently informed and involved on health and safety matters by the trade union and by the employer. They could then be encouraged to identify any gaps in the information that members receive and consider how they might ensure that they are more involved and better informed in future.

### Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit could be assessed holistically by a portfolio of candidate evidence covering all Evidence Requirements.

Assessment could comprise several separate tasks and it would be possible for a candidate to combine and submit these as one complete assignment. Evidence for assessment can be in any appropriate format as long as the minimum Evidence Requirements are met. For example, assessment may include case studies, group discussion, presentations, written or oral reports and/ or diagrammes.

### Assessment Guidelines

#### Outcome 1

Outcome 1 assessment could comprise responses in any appropriate format to a series of questions.

#### Outcome 2

Outcome 2 assessment could comprise responses in any appropriate format to a series of questions and could include a response to a case study.

#### Outcome 3

Outcome 3 assessment could comprise responses to a series of questions and a leaflet, poster or other communication produced by the candidate.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

### Online and Distance Learning

This Unit could be delivered by open learning; however it would require careful planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill of *Communication at SCQF level 6* will be developed by candidates through a range of activities (both written and oral) as well as class and group discussions.

The Core Skill of *Problem Solving at SCQF level 6* will be developed as the candidate will be dealing with various complex workplace issues and will also learn about the trade union approach to problem solving.

The Core Skill of *Working with Others at SCQF level 6* will be developed as the candidate will be involved in group discussions and group tasks, participate in union team building activities, theory and practice.

The Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 5* will be developed as the candidate will likely utilise computer search engines when carrying out research.

### 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Trade Union Approach to Health and Safety

This Unit is for you if you are new to the role of trade union health and safety representative or wish to undertake further training in this subject. The Unit is designed to provide you with the knowledge and understanding of the trade union worker — centred approach to occupational health, safety and welfare.

You must be able to demonstrate the support of your nominating union to undertake the Unit. The Unit forms part of the PDA in Trade Union Organising for Health and Safety at SCQF level 7 and is also contained within the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation.

There are three Outcomes in this Unit.

In Outcome 1 you will learn what the role and rights of a trade union health and safety representative are in relation to practice. You will look at the roles other people have and examine how trade union structures can be used to influence policy.

In Outcome 2 you will develop your analysis skills as you will examine the effectiveness of workplace health and safety arrangements and analyse the causes of an accident or ill-health incident. You will also learn about other workplace hazards, health and safety and welfare issues in particular the effects of gender inequality to women's occupational health and safety.

For Outcome 3 you will learn more about the trade union worker-centred approach to health, safety and welfare. You will provide examples from your workplace which demonstrate the relationship between occupational health and safety and well-being and evaluate how effective communication methods relating to H& S in your workplace are.

Assessment for the Unit is varied, with a mix of your responses to questions and set assignments which can include diagrammes, checklists, evaluation reports, leaflet or poster.

There may be opportunities during the Unit for you to also develop your Core Skills in *Communication, Problem Solving, Information and Communication Technology* and *Working with Others*.