



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** H6VR 34

**Superclass:** GF

**Publication date:** March 2014

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed to enable candidates who work or wish to work in the careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) sector to deliver services and information to CIAG customers by communicating with them using a range of appropriate methods and media. Candidates will also develop their skills in reflection and evaluation as they will review the effectiveness of the communication methods used to meet customer needs.

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the candidate will be able to:

- 1 Explain the range of communication methods used to deliver services in own CIAG organisation.
- 2 Communicate with CIAG customers using a range of media.
- 3 Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication methods used.

### Credit points and level

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

### Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, candidates would normally be expected to have competence in *Communication* skills at Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5) or similar qualifications. It would be beneficial if the candidate has some previous knowledge and experience of the career information, advice and guidance sector and the advisor's role within it. Competence in the use of IT and Internet Applications would be preferred.

## **Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)**

**Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SCQF level 7)

### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for 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 contained within the framework of the HNC in Career Information, Advice and Guidance Practice but can also be taken as a stand-alone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development.

### **Equality and inclusion**

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## **Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards**

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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 range of communication methods used to deliver services in own CIAG organisation.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Range of customers and their information needs
- ◆ Organisations service delivery methods and tools
- ◆ Relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and ethical requirements

### **Outcome 2**

Communicate with CIAG customers using a range of media.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Face to face communication with customers
- ◆ Telephone communication with customers
- ◆ Internet based communication with customers

### **Outcome 3**

Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication methods used.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Effectiveness of face to face customer communication
- ◆ Effectiveness of telephone based customer communication
- ◆ Effectiveness of internet based customer communication

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

**Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SCQF level 7)

### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can effectively communicate with CIAG customers using a range of media.

#### Outcome 1

Candidates should investigate the types of communication methods/media/tools available in their own organisation and provide an explanation for the appropriate use of each in relation to different customer needs.

#### Outcome 2 and 3

Candidates should provide evidence to cover **face to face**, telephone and internet communication with CIAG customers that demonstrates their own:

- ◆ Compliance with relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and ethical requirements.
- ◆ Provision of information or service to the CIAG customer using the appropriate communication media.
- ◆ Confirmation from the customer that they have received and understood the information given to them.
- ◆ Rationale for the communication method chosen to deliver the information or service to the customer.
- ◆ Review of the effectiveness of the method of communication used.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SCQF level 7)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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

Effective communication with customers is at the heart of CIAG service delivery. It is increasingly important that information and advice can be shared via a range of methods appropriate to the customer needs.

It is expected that centres will cover as a minimum:

Traditional service delivery methods such as:

- ◆ face to face and telephone communication
- ◆ use of emerging internet based communication technologies

Regardless of the method of communication used, jargon, technical terms or abbreviations should be clearly explained and confirmation that customers have received and understood the information should be sought.

#### Outcome 1

Ensuring that CIAG customers can access relevant information is important for effective service delivery. Those working in CIAG will need to be able to ensure that customers can receive the information relevant to them via the most appropriate communication channel.

Within CIAG, the range and scope of information that will have to be communicated includes:

- ◆ Occupational information
- ◆ Labour market information (LMI)
- ◆ Formal and informal learning opportunities and entry requirements
- ◆ Entry and progression routes and pathways in learning/training/continuing professional development
- ◆ Qualifications' frameworks
- ◆ Training opportunities/volunteering opportunities
- ◆ Financial support
- ◆ Decision-making programmes
- ◆ Job search, recruitment and selection
- ◆ Providers of related specialist support and information

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Candidates should be encouraged to identify the range of communication media available to them in terms of the information required by the customer and how best to communicate this information.

Candidates need to be aware of related legislation eg Data Protection, and any sectoral codes of practice, guidelines and ethical requirements covering the method of communication used.

### Outcome 2

One traditional method of CIAG service delivery has been on a face to face basis. Skills in greeting customers, application of listening and questioning skills, reading of body language and time management skills will be required.

The benefits of face to face communication can include:

- ◆ Opportunity for immediate feedback.
- ◆ Can identify uncertainties and clarify immediately.
- ◆ Allows for interaction between interviewer and interviewee.
- ◆ Allows for more subtle questioning.
- ◆ More likely that positive relationships will be formed between customer and organisation.
- ◆ Demonstrations can be given if required.
- ◆ May be appropriate if the discussion is confidential.
- ◆ Allows body language to be read.
- ◆ Promotes a good reputation that would ensure customer loyalty.
- ◆ Can make the customer feel valued.
- ◆ May help to defuse the situation if face to face as more personal.

Many CIAG advisers will also deliver services and information by telephone. Telephone techniques are an essential skill. Candidates must be able to communicate clearly and in a way that gets the message across. Body language should not be disregarded as attitude can be communicated over the telephone as well as in person. Candidates should be aware of the importance of:

- ◆ Listening skills
- ◆ Speaking skills, (tone and pace, showing interest, questioning skills)

Emerging internet based communication technology is increasingly used in the CIAG sector. For example:

- ◆ e-mail
- ◆ social and professional networking sites
- ◆ bespoke online tools
- ◆ web chat

Skills required to use these effectively will include:

- ◆ Skills in use of IT and Internet applications
- ◆ Reading and written Communication skills
- ◆ Internet safety awareness

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SQCF level 7)

### Outcome 3

Candidates will develop as a reflective practitioner by thinking about their own work performance. They will review the relevance and effectiveness of each method used to deliver services to customers. It may be helpful if candidates listed the benefits and drawbacks experienced when using each method.

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form part of a Group Award designed to provide candidates with technical or professional knowledge and skills for employment within the Career Information, Advice and Guidance sector.

Delivery of **Outcome 1** provides opportunities for group discussion and sharing experience of organisational practice (where applicable).

**Outcome 2** is a practical application of candidate skills in communicating with customers using a range of media. This can be based on candidates' own workplace practice, or if necessary the use of case studies.

For **Outcome 3**, candidates should be made aware of how they can use reflection and evaluation to improve their work practice and why this is important. As part of the overall review, candidates should be encouraged to reflect upon the methods of communication used to support customers.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to candidates.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where candidates experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

The Unit could be assessed by two instruments of assessment.

**Outcome 1** requires candidates to complete an investigative project, ideally based on their own organisation (or placement or centre devised case study as appropriate), which details the range of communication methods available to deliver services appropriate to CIAG customers.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SQCF level 7)

**Outcome 2 and 3** requires candidates to produce personal accounts which detail how they have provided services and/or information to customers via face to face, telephone and internet based communication methods. Candidates should reflect upon the communication method used in each situation and explain why the method used was appropriate for purpose. It may be appropriate to use assessor observation and questioning for aspects of Outcome 2. This would also provide an opportunity to integrate aspects of the assessment of Outcome 2 with assessment of other Units in the HNC in Career Information, Advice and Guidance Practice, eg CIAG: Supporting Customers to Access and Use Career Related Information. This will also help to authenticate the work of the candidate.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment 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. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment)

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components.

There will be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5 and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6. There may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5 as the candidate will be involved in the use of internet based service delivery.



## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Career Information, Advice and Guidance: Communicate with Customers Using a Range of Media (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

It would be beneficial if you have some previous knowledge and experience of the career information, advice and guidance sector and the advisor's role within it and are competent in the use of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

Within the CIAG process, there is a wide range of communication methods available. You will examine the range of communication methods in your organisation and decide which is most appropriate for customer needs.

In undertaking this Unit you will also develop the ability to use the most appropriate method of communication to support customers, whether that is face to face, telephone or internet based.

You will develop the transferable skills required to be a reflective practitioner by reviewing the effectiveness of communication methods used.

In summary, upon successful completion of the Unit you will be able to:

- ◆ Explain the range of communication methods used to deliver services in own CIAG organisation.
- ◆ Communicate with CIAG customers using a range of media.
- ◆ Explain the effectiveness of the communication method used.

By undertaking this Unit, you will also have the opportunity to develop Core Skills in *Communication, Problem Solving, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Working with Others*.