

-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Unit Number- **8460416**
-Superclass- **CY**
-Title- **MANAGING INFORMATION**

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Applying effective techniques to ensure accurate information is available in the correct format to assist in the management of the organisation.

OUTCOMES

1. obtain, record and store information for management purposes;
2. analyse information to support decision making;
3. present information and advice to support the management function;
4. contribute to meetings and group discussions;
5. establish information and communication systems.

CREDIT VALUE: 2 HN Credits

ACCESS STATEMENT: Access is at the discretion of the presenting centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate can show evidence of communication and numeracy skills.

For further information contact: Committee and Administration Unit, SQA, Hanover House, 24 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 7NQ.

Additional copies of this unit may be purchased from SQA (Sales and Despatch section). At the time of publication, the cost is £1.50 (minimum order £5.00).

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

UNIT NUMBER: 8460416

UNIT TITLE: MANAGING INFORMATION

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

OUTCOME

1. OBTAIN, RECORD AND STORE INFORMATION FOR MANAGEMENT PURPOSES

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Methods of collecting accurate, relevant information from reliable sources including electronic media are correct and make effective use of resources.
- (b) Systems and procedures for recording and storing information are evaluated in terms of their suitability for their purpose, complying with organisational policies and legal requirements and making efficient use of resources.
- (c) Information is readily accessible in the required format to authorised people only.
- (d) Confidentiality is maintained according to the organisational and legal requirements.

RANGE STATEMENT

Information: quantitative; qualitative.

Methods: listening and watching; reading; use of electronic media; questioning; research; developing contacts.

Systems and procedures: formal; informal; organisation wide; specific to an individual or team.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must provide evidence to show that they can obtain, record and store appropriate information for management purposes.

This should include written and/or oral evidence that a candidate can:

- correctly collect accurate, relevant information from three types of reliable sources including one electronic source;
- use appropriate methods of collecting information;
- correctly collect record and store both quantitative and qualitative information using suitable systems and procedures;
- use of systems and procedures, one of which involves information technology;
- comply with all types of organisational constraints and legal requirements.

OUTCOME

2. ANALYSE INFORMATION TO SUPPORT DECISION MAKING

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Objectives of analysis are clear and consistent with the decisions which need to be made.
- (b) Information selected for the analysis is accurate, relevant to the objectives of the analysis and sufficient to arrive at a reliable decision.
- (c) Analysis of information uses suitable techniques, and correctly identifies patterns and trends.
- (d) Conclusions drawn from the analysis are supported by reasoned argument and appropriate evidence and show the assumptions and decisions made at each stage.

RANGE STATEMENT

Analysis: formal and planned; informal and ad-hoc.

Information: quantitative; qualitative.

Techniques: manual; electronic.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must provide evidence to show that they can correctly analyse information to support decision making.

This should include written and/or oral evidence of:

- clear and consistent objectives;
- accurate, relevant information selected for the analysis;
- correct application of both formal and planned, and informal and ad-hoc analysis;
- at least three types of relevant decision;
- both qualitative and quantitative information analysed correctly;

- correct use of suitable techniques including one computer based technique;
- patterns and trends are correctly identified;
- conclusions, supported by reasoned arguments;
- assumptions and decisions made at each stage.

OUTCOME

3. PRESENT INFORMATION AND ADVICE TO SUPPORT THE MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Advice and information are presented in an appropriate form, at a suitable time and place and the recipient's understanding of the advice and information is confirmed.
- (b) Advice given is consistent with procedures and constraints, and is supported by reasoned argument and appropriate evidence.
- (c) Information given is accurate, current, relevant and sufficient.
- (d) Research into the advice and information needs of recipients is appropriate and sufficient and within organisational constraints.
- (e) Feedback mechanisms are created in line with organisational procedures.

RANGE STATEMENT

Forms of advice and information: oral presentation; memorandum; report.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must provide evidence to show that they can provide information and advice to support the management function.

This should include written or oral evidence of:

- research into the information and advice needs of the recipient;
- oral presentation conforming to conventional approaches;
- a written management report conforming to conventional approaches;
- a one page memorandum conforming to conventional approaches;
- at least three types of recipients;
- giving sound advice on own initiative or in response to requests;
- keeping information and advice within organisational objectives and policies;
- correct confirmation of recipient's understanding of information and advice;
- accurate, current, relevant and sufficient information;
- correct use of feedback to improve future provision of advice and information.

OUTCOME

4. CONTRIBUTE TO MEETINGS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Information obtained in preparation for meetings and group discussions is sufficient, relevant and accurate.
- (b) Contributions to meetings and group discussions are clear, concise and effective in clarifying problems and identifying and assessing solutions.
- (c) The purpose and objectives of the meeting are clearly agreed with group members in sufficient time to enable them to prepare effectively.
- (d) Meetings are led by encouraging all group members to make appropriate contributions, effectively discouraging unhelpful contributions, keeping to agreed time scales, making clear summaries at appropriate places and by acknowledging contributions and viewpoints of other group members.
- (e) Clear, accurate and concise information about outcomes and decisions is provided to appropriate people.

RANGE STATEMENT

Meetings and group discussions: informal; formal.

Purpose of meetings and discussions: information giving; consultation; decision-making.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must provide evidence that they can contribute to and lead group discussions.

This should include written or oral evidence of:

- sufficient, relevant and accurate information having been obtained for presentation to meetings;
- agreement of purpose and objectives of the meetings with group members in good time;
- correctly leading meetings by encouraging all group members to make appropriate contributions, effectively discouraging unhelpful contributions, keeping to agreed time scales, making clear summaries at appropriate places and by effectively acknowledging contributions and viewpoints of other group members;
- provision of clear and concise information about the outcomes and decisions to appropriate people;
- at least three types of group members;
- both formal and informal meetings;

OUTCOME

5. ESTABLISH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Information requirements are correctly identified and take into account the users' opinions and current and likely future needs.
- (b) Specifications of information requirements are clear, accurate, and consistent with organisational resources, objectives, policies and constraints and are agreed with users.
- (c) Proposed systems which meet clear and agreed criteria are fully evaluated and comply with organisational policies and legal requirements.
- (d) An implementation plan is proposed which is agreed by the users and other relevant people and which identifies their roles in the implementation.
- (e) Information and communication systems are monitored against agreed criteria and modifications made to the systems to effectively overcome problems identified.

RANGE STATEMENT

Users: peers; line manager.

Information processes: formal; informal.

Information and communication system: computer-based; non computer-based.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must provide evidence to show that they can establish information and communication systems.

This should include written or oral evidence of:

- correct identification of information requirement and users;
- clear accurate specifications of information requirements and users;
- organisational constraints;
- fully evaluated proposed manual system;
- fully evaluated proposed computer system;
- an agreed implementation plan, agreed by users and other relevant people which identifies correctly their roles in the implementation;
- effective monitoring of information and communications systems;
- appropriate modifications to information and communications systems to correctly overcome problems identified.

MERIT A candidate who achieves all performance criteria for all outcomes will be awarded a pass. A pass with merit will be awarded where candidates demonstrate superior performance over the unit as a whole by showing that can achieve outcomes within an extended context in which for example they:

- demonstrate the capacity to deal with information of non-standard or complex type;
- contribute to meetings or group discussions which deal with complex issues;
- establish a more complex or innovative information or communications system.

ASSESSMENT

In order to achieve this unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the performance criteria for each outcome within the range specified. Details of these requirements are given for each outcome. The assessment instruments used should follow the general guidance offered by the SQA assessment model and an integrative approach to assessment is encouraged. (See references at the end of support notes.)

Accurate records should be made of the assessment instruments used showing how evidence is generated for each outcome and giving marking schemes and/or checklists, etc. Records of candidates' achievements should be kept. These records will be available for external verification.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Proposals to modify outcomes, range statements or agreed assessment arrangements should be discussed in the first place with the external verifier.

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HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION**SUPPORT NOTES**

UNIT NUMBER: 8460416

UNIT TITLE: MANAGING INFORMATION

SUPPORT NOTES: This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

NOTIONAL DESIGN LENGTH: SQA allocates a notional design length to a unit on the basis of time estimated for achievement of the stated standards by a candidate whose starting point is as described in the access statement. The notional design length for this unit is 80 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE This unit is designed for recently appointed managers who wish to develop their management skills, and for those managers who may wish to accredit their experiential learning.

Candidates will be able to use information effectively in all aspects of their management activities.

CONTENT/CONTEXT Corresponding to all outcomes:

The candidate should achieve a level of competence of a manager in a working environment. That is a broad range of work activities involving the management of information in a variety of work contexts and not necessarily of a routine nature.

Corresponding to Outcomes:

1. Ways of determining information requirements; research methods; methods of collating information; sources - team members, customers, suppliers, published media, electronic media, contacts within and outwith the organisation; criteria for selecting methods of information collection and management; methods - listening and watching, questioning, use of electronic media, research, developing contacts; purpose and role of information in decision making; impact of external environment and legislation; strategic objectives and plans; information management systems, formal, informal, organisation wide, specific to an individual or team, methods of recording and storing, criteria for judging and evaluating methods; accessibility - team members, higher level managers, colleagues at the same level; resource limitations. Application of information technology should be emphasised throughout.

2. Ways of formulating objectives for analysis; methods of information analysis and interpretation formal, informal ad-hoc; decisions concerning - day to day operations, researching, quality of serviced products, customer requirements, changes in organisational policy which affects operations; criteria for selecting methods; use of computer techniques; approaches to and methods of analysis of decision making; assessing and evaluating information; performance indicators and data; business planning and budget cycle; user needs and requirements.
3. Advice and information - in response to request, on own initiative; recipients - team members, colleagues at same level, higher level managers, customers, suppliers; ways of summarizing information; written methods of presentation; graphical methods of presentation; methods of consultation and establishing needs of recipients; feedback from recipients; organisation policies and procedures on disclosing information.
4. Ways of establishing purpose and information needs; information giving, consultation, decision making; group members - team members, colleagues at the same level, higher management level, specialist, suppliers; methods of consultation; ways of communicating and influencing - formal, informal; methods of group problem solving and decision making; approaches to conflict resolution; forecasting and organising time; work scheduling; ways of setting priorities; agenda setting; methods and styles of chairing; methods of review and evaluation.
5. Methods of consultation and establishing user needs; information requirements - scope and depth, purpose to which information will be put, accessibility, confidentiality; ways of forecasting future information needs; information and communication processes; role and purpose of information in decision making; structure role and responsibilities; resource limitations; relevant legislation; methods of determining and agreeing criteria; application of information technology; application of criteria to evaluation - qualitative, quantitative; planning and budgeting methods; project management; implementing proposals; ways of presenting proposals; cost benefit analysis; approaches to design of feedback; planning application of monitoring and review processes; fault diagnosis; ways of presenting evaluations; importance of hidden knowledge.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE The outcomes of this unit involve the candidate carrying out the application of practical skills from developed knowledge and understanding. As such a student-centred approach utilising resources likely to be met within the workplace is expected.

In relation to the written evidence requirements, evidence may well be generated in the workplace. However it may not be possible to cover all the range. Case studies using similar forms and documents that exist in the workplace should allow the candidate to generate the appropriate evidence.

Evidence may take the form of:

Activities - eg. meeting, presentations, information handling, information gathering, observed behaviour, operation of information systems; negotiations.

Products or outcomes - eg. agendas and minutes, correspondence, video presentation materials (notes and visual aids) correspondence and work records, documentation, printouts, records of decisions, specification documents, proposal documents, implementation plans.

Written or verbal reports - eg. how to establish information requirements, how to record and store information, how to collect, analyse and present information, how groups form and operate, how to provide feedback following meetings, how to exercise leadership in chairing meetings, how to identify, access and utilize sources of information, how to select methods of analysis, how to set objectives for analysis, how to judge information, how to identify trends, how to write and present specifications.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES The use of practical and realistic case materials allows for evaluation of the candidates work product in the form of working papers and work product records but also allow for evaluation of processes used by the candidate to achieve the work product. It is, therefore, recommended that an observation checklist is incorporated into the candidate's portfolio of evidence, thus supporting the level of competence expected of the candidate meeting the description contained in the context statement.

PROGRESSION This unit forms part of the HNC in Management. It contributes to the underpinning knowledge requirement of the SVQ Management level IV.

REFERENCES

1. Guide to unit writing.
2. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
3. Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures.
4. For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list.

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