

-SQA-SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Module Number- 6270016

-Session-1996-97

-Superclass- EA

-Title- PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the structures and operating procedures of public sector organisations.

OUTCOMES

1. describe the rationale for the existence of public control in the UK;
2. explain the changing working environment of civil servants;
3. describe the types of organisation which operate in the public sector with reference to Scotland;
4. explain elements of the public sector financial process.

CREDIT VALUE: 1 NC Credit

ACCESS STATEMENT: Successful completion of some or all of the following modules is desirable - 7110045 Communication 3; 6280006 Central Government in the U.K.; An Introduction; 6270006 Local Government Operation in Scotland.

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).

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION**STATEMENT OF STANDARDS****UNIT NUMBER:** 6270016**UNIT TITLE:** PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

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. DESCRIBE THE RATIONALE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF PUBLIC CONTROL IN THE UK

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) The distinguishing features of public control are clearly described.
- (b) The nature of public control is identified and clearly described.
- (c) The main reasons for public control in the UK are correctly described.
- (d) The main criticisms of public described in the UK are correctly explained.

RANGE STATEMENT

Distinguishing features: variance of objectives; finance; political influence; rule of law 'ultra-vires'; accountability.

Nature of public control: government departments; executive agencies; local authorities; 'quangos'.

Main reasons: political; post war reconstruction; public interest; improved industrial relations.

Criticisms high cost and inefficiencies; lack of consumer sensitivity; outdated practices

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria and range statement.

OUTCOME

2. EXPLAIN THE CHANGING WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF CIVIL SERVANTS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) The established principles of public service are clearly explained.
- (b) The traditional features of the British Civil Service are clearly described.
- (c) The objectives of 'new public management' are clearly explained.
- (d) The main reforms in the civil service are correctly described.

RANGE STATEMENT

Establishing principles: neutrality; anonymity; equity; permanence.

Traditional features: size; location; recruitment; elitism.

Objectives of 'new public management': economy; efficiency; effectiveness.

Reforms: down-sizing; agencies; managerial techniques.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria and range statement.

OUTCOME

3. DESCRIBE THE TYPES OF ORGANISATION WHICH OPERATE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WITH REFERENCE TO SCOTLAND

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) The main elements of bureaucratic theory are clearly described in terms of their suitability for public sector organisations.
- (b) The main characteristics of UK government departments are clearly explained.
- (c) The main features of other types of public bodies are correctly described.
- (d) The role of the Scottish Office is described accurately with reference to its changing structure and responsibilities.

RANGE STATEMENT

Public bodies: 'quangos'; local authorities.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria and range statement.

For PC (c) evidence should relate to local authorities and quangos.

OUTCOME

4. EXPLAIN ELEMENTS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR FINANCIAL PROCESS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) The main sources of revenue are clearly identified.
- (b) Current trends in public expenditure are correctly described.
- (c) The role of the Treasury in the public expenditure cycle is clearly explained.
- (d) The monitoring methods available to parliament for controlling public expenditure are correctly described.

RANGE STATEMENT

Revenue sources of direct taxation; indirect taxation; privatisation; borrowing.

Methods debates; legislation; committees; national audit office.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all of the performance criteria and range statement.

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

In certain cases, modified outcomes and range statements can be proposed for certification. See references at end of support notes.

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NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION**SUPPORT NOTES****UNIT NUMBER:** 6270016**UNIT TITLE:** PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

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 40 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE SQA publishes summaries of NC units for easy reference, publicity purposes, centre handbooks, etc. The summary statement for this unit is as follows:

This module has been designed as one of a group of modules in the field of public administration. It aims to provide candidates with an introductory knowledge of the structure, operating and financial procedures of public sector organisations.

It is primarily intended for candidates who are in, or who wish to take up, employment in the public sector. It may also be of interest to candidates with a general interest in the operation of public services and the political system of the UK.

This module introduces the candidate to public bodies in the UK and aims to develop an understanding of the reasons for their existence and the ways in which they operate.

CONTENT/CONTEXT Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

Outcome 1

Distinguishing features of public control.

- goal variance; sources of funding; statutory constraints - the 'ultra vires' principle; levels of accountability.

Types of public sector organisation - government departments; local authorities; executive agencies; 'quangos'; - public corporation.

Development of the public sector - reasons for public control - ideological; political; economic; phases of development - inter war period; post war.

Criticisms of public control - cost; out-dated practices; lack of consumer sensitivity 'privatisation' - its forms arguments for this.

Outcome 2

Operating principles of public service - neutrality; anonymity; equity; permanence. Traditional features of the British Civil Service - size; location; recruitment; elitism; criticisms of these features.

The ideology of new public management - the new approach to the management of services in the public sector; meaning of the three 'E's - economy; efficiency; effectiveness. New management techniques in the public sector - information systems (MINIS); performance management; secondment; contracting out. Application of these to civil service eg. 'Raynerism', the next steps programme.

Outcome 3

Elements of bureaucracy - its main features e.g. hierarchy; continuity; impersonality; specialization; written documentation.

Characteristics of government departments - organisational structure; concept of ministerial responsibility; dual management of ministers and civil servants.

Public bodies - the characteristics of other organisational models - local authority; executive agency; 'quango'. Differences between these models - structure; funding.

The Scottish Office - origins and development; staffing; main functions; relationship with the Scottish bodies; recent reforms.

Outcome 4

Sources of revenue. Direct and indirect taxation. Borrowing. Use of the private sector - the PFI, stocks and bonds.

Public expenditure trends. Economic theories relating to public expenditure - Keynesianism; monetarism. Current government policy and objectives. Effects of this.

Public expenditure cycle - timetable - main stages. Role of the Treasury. Role of the Cabinet.

Control mechanisms in Parliament - debates; standing committees; select committees - treasury and civil service select committee; public accounts committee - national audit office.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE The following approaches are considered suitable for the delivery of this module - lecturer exposition; case studies; project work; use of audio and visual material - articles from newspapers and journals; institutional publications and reports. Candidates should also be made aware of the range of TV and radio programmes which cover the work of public bodies. The module also lends itself to 'site visits' to the offices of public bodies e.g. branch offices of government departments, local authorities and other organisations.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES Centres may use the instruments of assessment which are considered by tutors to be the most appropriate. The following schedule is produced by way of illustration only.

Corresponding to outcomes:

- Outcome 1 PC (a)-(d) Extended Response
- Outcome 2 PC (a)-(e) Restricted Responses
- Outcome 3 PC (a)-(c) Restricted Responses or Case Study
- Outcome 4 PC (a)-(d) Restricted Responses.

PROGRESSION This module is part of a group which focuses on the administration and delivery of public services.

It includes:

- 6280006 Central Government in the UK: An Introduction.
- 6270006 Local Government operations in Scotland.
- 6290006 Development of Welfare Services.
- 6290016 Welfare provision Scotland.

Successful completion of these modules will allow the student to progress to more advanced study of the field as contained, for example, in the following HN units:

- 6580036 Fundamentals of Public Sector Service
- 6580026 The Framework of UK Central Policy Making
- 6570016 Scottish Local Government Administration
- 6590026 Health Service Administration in Scotland
- 6451376 Administrative Law
- 7440453 Provision of Social Welfare

RECOGNITION Many SQA NC units are recognised for entry/recruitment purposes. For up-to-date information see the SQA guide 'Recognised Groupings of National Certificate Modules'.

REFERENCES

1. Guide to unit writing. (A018).
2. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment. (B005).
3. Procedures for special needs statements are set out in SQA's guide 'Candidates with Special Needs'. (B006).
4. Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures. (F009).
5. For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list. (X037).

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