

-SQA-SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Module Number-	7130134	-Session-1994-95
-Superclass-	CZ	
-Title-	USING INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SKILLS 3 (x¹/₂)	

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Improving skills in the location, assessment and use of resources and the efficient extraction of relevant information from such sources in order to function self-sufficiently in, for example, a library/resource centre.

OUTCOMES

1. plan an information retrieval task;
2. locate and use a range of sources of information to extract information relevant to a task;
3. present information extracted from a range of sources of information;
4. evaluate the effectiveness of a plan for an information retrieval task.

CREDIT VALUE: 0.5 NC Credit

ACCESS STATEMENT: 7130124 Using Information Retrieval Skills 2 or an equivalent level of experience.

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

This specification is distributed free to all approved centres. Additional copies may be purchased from SQA (Sales and Despatch section) at a cost of £1.50 (minimum order £5).

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION**STATEMENT OF STANDARDS****UNIT NUMBER:** 7130134**UNIT TITLE:** USING INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SKILLS 3

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. PLAN AN INFORMATION RETRIEVAL TASK

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Definition of purpose and scope of information retrieval task is clear and accurate.
- (b) Preliminary outline plan for information retrieval task is clear.
- (c) Identification of a range of potential sources of information is accurate and complete.
- (d) Assessment of availability of sources of information is accurate.
- (e) Detailed step-by-step plan for the information retrieval task is logical and clear.
- (f) Feasibility of plan is reviewed thoroughly and plan adjusted accordingly.

RANGE STATEMENT

Sources: print; non-print.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Oral and/or written evidence which satisfies PCs (a)-(d) and PC (f).

The use of a minimum of five sources should be planned including both print and non-print sources.

Recorded evidence in an appropriate format for PC (e).

OUTCOME

2. LOCATE AND USE A RANGE OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO EXTRACT INFORMATION RELEVANT TO A TASK

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Location of sources of information within a library/resource centre is accurate.
- (b) Location of relevant information within each source of information is accurate.
- (c) Evaluation of information is accurate, within the parameters of the task.
- (d) Collation of relevant information from a range of sources of information is accurate and comprehensive, within the scope of the task.
- (e) Detailed and accurate records of information retrieval procedures are maintained.

RANGE STATEMENT

Sources: print; non-print.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Oral and/or written and/or performance evidence which satisfies PCs (a)-(b).

Oral and/or written evidence for PC (c).

Recorded evidence in an appropriate format for PCs (d) and (e).

A minimum of five sources should be used, at least one of which should be non-print.

OUTCOME

3. PRESENT INFORMATION EXTRACTED FROM A RANGE OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Information extracted from a range of sources is processed correctly and is related clearly to the parameters of the information retrieval task.
- (b) Format of the presentation is appropriate to the task in terms of purpose and scope of information retrieval task.
- (c) Structure of the presentation is appropriate in terms of task and audience.

- (d) All essential information is included and language is clear and accurate.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range for this outcome is fully expressed within the performance criteria.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Recorded evidence in an appropriate format which satisfies PCs (a)-(d).

OUTCOME

4. EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PLAN FOR AN INFORMATION RETRIEVAL TASK

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Evaluation of the plan meeting its objectives is clear and complete.
- (b) Recommendations for improvement of future strategy are detailed, realistic and logical.
- (c) The learning gained through the implementation and evaluation of the information retrieval task is stated clearly and related to future personal and vocational information needs.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range for this outcome is fully expressed within the performance criteria.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Oral and/or written evidence which satisfies Performance Criteria (a)-(c).

ASSESSMENT RECORDS

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 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.

© Copyright SQA 1993

Please note that this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that:

- (i) no profit is derived from the reproduction;
- (ii) if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION**SUPPORT NOTES**

UNIT NUMBER: 7130134

UNIT TITLE: USING INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SKILLS 3

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

PURPOSE This module enables the candidate to practise and refine his/her skills in the location, evaluation and utilisation of resources, so that he/she can function self-sufficiently in, for example, a library/resource centre.

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 enables you to practise and improve your skills in the location, evaluation and use of resources. During the module you will devise and implement an information retrieval task and present the resulting information in an appropriate format.

CONTENT/CONTEXT As far as possible the information retrieval task and the sources of information used should be relevant to other areas of the candidate's study programme or area of work. Alternatively a task may be chosen which will prepare the candidate for future information retrieval activities in higher education. The scope for information retrieval tasks is wide ranging and might include such tasks as:

- production of an annotated subject bibliography
- researching a topic and producing a graphical and verbal summary of the findings
- presenting a case for and against a controversial topic
- compilation of a detailed list of persons and organisations which disseminate information on chosen subjects

In the initial stages of the module candidates, working independently, should identify and clearly define the purpose and scope of an information retrieval task and explain its relevance to themselves. Candidates should set appropriate limitations on the scope of the task e.g. currency, language, level and format of information, timescale within which information must be accessed. Though not all types of information source are relevant to a particular enquiry, the candidate should design the task so that he/she has the opportunity to handle several types of print and non-print sources. Examples of such types of sources include:

Print sources

textbooks
encyclopedias
dictionaries
directories and yearbooks
statistical publications
periodicals and newspapers
pamphlets
photographs

Non-print sources

computer databases
CD-ROM
microforms
teletext
viewdata
videotapes
audio cassettes, records, compact discs
people/organisations

In the location of the sources candidates should use as wide a range as possible of appropriate print based or electronic catalogues, indexes, help menus, abstracting services, directories and bibliographies. Candidates should not limit themselves to sources of information which are available within their own centre or immediate area of work. It is desirable that candidates are made aware of the information resources of the wider community and where applicable access information through outside agencies or through the inter-library loan network.

Candidates should produce a detailed step-by-step plan outlining the stages in the information retrieval task and giving a time scale for these.

For each of the chosen sources their uses and relative merits should be discussed. Candidates should define and apply criteria for evaluating an information source (currency, objectivity, authority etc.) and make the distinction between primary and secondary information.

When seeking information in a specific source the candidate should locate the information in a methodical way using indexes (printed or automated) and other aids. Locating the required information in a random manner is not sufficient to fulfil/build into the performance criteria. As much emphasis should be laid on the process of locating the information as on the end result.

Candidates should detail and prioritise tasks to achieve the objectives of the information retrieval task. Activities should be organised to a self-constructed timescale and candidates will require to demonstrate evidence of commitment and competence in undertaking all aspects of the information retrieval task. The tutor/trainer should look for evidence of effective self-monitoring, recording of information retrieval procedures and the reporting of the findings in a detailed and accurate manner.

The results of the information search should be recorded in an appropriate format. Candidates should specify in advance what information is required and give a justification for their decision as to the most suitable methods for recording and presenting this information. Methods for presenting information might include:

Short project

Detailed notes for a talk or essay or for use by another person

Annotated bibliography or materiography

Audio or video format

Or a combination of these

Outcome 4 offers the opportunity for the candidate to evaluate and analyse the information retrieval process and his/her performance in task management and to identify and learn from any difficulties experienced in carrying out the task. The candidate should, in particular, examine any deviations from the original plan which were necessary in actual practice and provide reasons for these deviations. This analysis should lead into suggestions for an improved information retrieval process in future so that the candidate can propose with a significant degree of insight a detailed strategy, in terms of task definition, identification and location of resources, extraction of information from sources and the presentation of this information.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE Ideally this module should be delivered in an integrated way so that the information task flows naturally from the demands of other modules/units which make up the candidate's programme or from the candidate's work activities. It is particularly appropriate when integrated with any module which involves a project or other task necessitating information searching. Examples of such modules include:

Local Investigations 1-4

Investigating Europe 1-4

Communication 3 and 4

It can also be combined with one of the Using Learning Skills modules, most usefully near the beginning of a study programme.

As the module aims to enable candidates to practise and refine information handling skills which they can apply in different situations, the tutor/trainer should, as far as possible, even where the module is not integrated with other modules, encourage the candidate to design the information retrieval task to have a vocational emphasis. It may be possible in many instances to use actual examples of information required by candidates for vocational, recreational or personal purposes as illustrations of the assessed techniques.

In this module the tutor/trainer acts as a facilitator and candidates take responsibility for devising, planning and implementing the information retrieval task. The tutor/trainer acts in a consultative role and it is important that this is explained to candidates at the outset. Input from the tutor/trainer will however still be necessary at the beginning of the module in order to introduce candidates to more complex sources of information or information retrieval procedures with which they may not be familiar. The tutor/trainer should assist the candidates to develop good practice in information seeking techniques by responding to candidates in such a way that they are encouraged to think about the information seeking process and the reasons and rationale underlying it.

The practical exercises may take place in the library/resource centre using the actual sources of information, catalogues, indexes etc. which the candidates might be expected to use in their learning/work activities. In addition candidates should be encouraged to access the information resources available outwith their own centre/immediate work area and to make use of eg. inter-library loans where necessary.

Where personal interviews are used in Outcome 4 these can usefully be undertaken in a small group situation in order that candidates can share experiences and learn from one another.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES Centres may use the Instruments of Assessment which are considered by tutors/trainers to be the most appropriate. Examples of Instruments of Assessment which could be used are as follows:

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-3:

1. Project brief, planning sheets and oral questioning.
2. Practical exercise.
3. Practical exercise.
4. Personal interview, drawing on the oral or written evidence from Outcomes 1-3.

PROGRESSION This module is the third in a series of modules on Information Skills. Modules 7130114 Using Information Retrieval Skills 1 and 7130124 Using Information Retrieval Skills 2 set less demanding targets for candidates.

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

REFERENCES

1. Guidelines for Module Writers.
2. SQA's National Standards for Assessment and Verification.
3. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
4. Procedures for special needs statements are set out in SQA's guide 'Students with Special Needs'.

© Copyright SQA 1993

Please note that this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that:

- (i) no profit is derived from the reproduction;
- (ii) if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.