

-SQA-SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

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NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE DESCRIPTOR

-Module Number- 7350030 -Session- 1990-91
-Superclass- HC

**-Title- GUIDANCE: INVESTIGATING CAREER
OPPORTUNITIES (x¹/₂)**

-DESCRIPTION-

Purpose This module is aimed at a variety of different groups, from school pupils, students in further education, community education and other training organisations, to those in employment who are considering a career change or who have been made redundant. It provides a framework for those who are designing programmes for such groups, eg. schools, careers officers, industry liaison officers, those involved in pre-vocational education and training, and vocational guidance.

The module identifies the process involved in vocational guidance, both pre-entry and on-going, and assists in providing a framework for formulating courses in careers guidance.

It is intended for the following groups:

- school pupils
- students involved in a variety of education and training programmes
- students involved in 'taster' courses and 'pathfinder' courses in Further Education or Community Education
- people in employment who are considering a change in career
- people considering leaving employment to take up education and training
- people leaving employment as a result of redundancy.

The module is designed to meet the needs of these different target groups and lends itself to a variety of different modes of delivery and presentation.

This module does not provide a comprehensive careers education programme; it does not permit students to investigate a wide range of possible career routes nor will it provide students with a definitive career choice. However, it is anticipated that it will form an important element in many careers education programmes, and will provide a framework within which, in a school or FE college setting, teaching staff and careers education personnel will collaborate in the delivery of education and training programmes.

The module is one of a range which provides breadth and balance in programmes of learning. The descriptor should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines for Personal and Social Development modules.

Personal and Social Development modules are designed to develop:

- task management skills (planning, organising and decision making);
- interpersonal and group skills;
- self-awareness, self-reliance and self-confidence;
- the ability to seek and use appropriate knowledge.

These aims have vocational as much as personal and social relevance.

The module, for particular groups, eg. those who are involved in 'taster', 'pathfinder' courses in Further Education or Community Education, could be offered with:

81187 Guidance: Options and Choices.

For school leavers it could be offered with:

7350050 Pre-Exit Guidance

81200 Work Experience 1

81201 Work Experience 2

81202 Work Experience 3

81228 Job Seeking Skills 1

81229 Job Seeking Skills 2

For those in employment who are considering a change of career, either through personal choice or through redundancy, it could be offered with:

81228 Job Seeking Skills 1

81229 Job Seeking Skills 2

7350050 Pre-Exit Guidance

There are opportunities for integrating this module with other modules in the Guidance section of the Personal and Social Development cognate group.

Preferred Entry Level	No formal entry requirements.
Outcomes	<p>The student should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify skills, interests and abilities related to previous experience and performance; 2. plan an investigation into career opportunities from appropriate sources of information; 3. undertake an investigation into a selected vocational area. 4. review the learning gained through an investigation into career opportunities.
Assessment Procedures	<p>Acceptable performance in the module will be satisfactory achievement of all the Performance Criteria specified for each Outcome.</p> <p>The following abbreviations are used below:</p> <p>IA Instrument of Assessment PC Performance Criteria</p> <p>Note: The Outcomes and PCs are mandatory and cannot be altered. The IA may be altered by arrangement with SQA. (Where a range of performance is indicated, this should be regarded as an extension of the PCs and is therefore mandatory.)</p>

OUTCOMES 1-4 A Project and a Personal Interview

In the Project the student is required to review skills, interests and abilities related to previous experience and to plan and undertake an investigation into career opportunities in a selected vocational area. During the investigation the student should assemble a folder of assessment evidence in relation to the Outcomes as indicated below.

The Personal Interview is central to the assessment and will be used to explore the student's experience and learning through the investigation into career opportunities. The Personal Interview will be conducted by the tutor and will usually take place on an individual basis but can also be undertaken as a group exercise at the discretion of the tutor. The interview may take place on an on-going basis throughout the module or towards the end of the module.

Although it is not the intention to have a discrete Interview for each Outcome, the Interview should focus on the Performance Criteria for each Outcome and should draw on relevant assessment evidence from the student's folder. A test specification for the Personal Interview is appended.

Outcome 1 Review Sheet
 Outcome 2 Planning Sheet
 Outcome 3 Log Sheet
 Outcome 4 Review Sheet

OUTCOME 1 IDENTIFY SKILLS, INTERESTS AND ABILITIES RELATED TO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE

- PCs
- (a) Key factors of previous experience and performance are identified.
 - (b) The identification of strengths and weaknesses in relation to previous experience and performance is accurate.
 - (c) The production of a self-assessment overview is complete in terms of skills, interests and abilities.

IA Project and Personal Interview

Satisfactory performance will be achievement of all the Performance Criteria.

OUTCOME 2 PLAN AN INVESTIGATION INTO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FROM APPROPRIATE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- PCs
- (a) The planning of activities takes account of skills, interests and abilities.
 - (b) A general outline of the plan is complete.
 - (c) The identification of possible sources of information is accurate.

- (d) Collected information to aid planning is relevant.
- (e) The production of a detailed and realistic plan is complete.

IA Project and Personal Interview

Satisfactory performance will be achievement of all the Performance Criteria.

OUTCOME 3 UNDERTAKE AN INVESTIGATION INTO A SELECTED VOCATIONAL AREA

- PCs
- (a) The accessing and use of information resources is correct.
 - (b) A record of investigation procedures is accurate.
 - (c) A report on investigation findings is detailed and accurate.

IA Project and Personal Interview

Satisfactory performance will be achievement of all the Performance Criteria.

OUTCOME 4 REVIEW THE LEARNING GAINED THROUGH AN INVESTIGATION INTO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- PCs
- (a) The identification of elements involved in making a career choice is correct.
 - (b) An explanation of the skills involved in planning an investigation into career opportunities is clear.
 - (c) The identification of how skills gained in information retrieval can be applied to future career choice is clear.
 - (d) Consideration of possible effects of the learning gained on future plans is evident in the review.

IA Project and Personal Interview

Satisfactory performance will be the achievement of all the Performance Criteria.

**The following sections of the descriptor are offered as guidance.
They are not mandatory.**

CONTENT/CONTEXT

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

1. The aim of this section is to encourage students to examine their skills, interests and abilities, and to identify key factors which are important to them in relation to career choice. This will involve the identification of their strengths and weaknesses.

It is important to encourage students to examine all aspects of their previous experience including:

- Educational Experience
- Life Experience
- Work Experience

Students should be encouraged to recognise that they are likely to have experience in many areas. eg. school students may assume their experience is limited to education, but they should also examine their life experiences where they may have developed practical skills and abilities through leisure interests, interpersonal skills through dealing with other people and a number of skills, abilities and interests which have been developed through a part-time job or school based work experience.

By examining their experience and past performance students should then be able to identify key factors which are important to them in relation to career choice, including a careful examination of their strengths and weaknesses.

This should be completed as accurately as possible to ensure that the student has an accurate picture of previous performance, which will enable them to plan a relevant career investigation.

2. The aim of this section is to get students to identify the vocational area which they wish to investigate and to undertake planning for the project.

The planning should take into account the identification of skills, interests and abilities in Outcome 1. The student should choose to investigate a vocational area, which is realistic to their abilities and interests.

Depending on the vocational maturity and age of the student, the vocational area identified may range from a wide "job family" - eg. social/caring, clerical/administrative to a specific job/career eg. veterinary medicine/electrician.

The plan should detail some of the following.

- student's chosen topic
- reasons for choosing the topic (ref. to Outcome 1)
- what information is required
- how they are going to access the information eg. letter/visits/surveys
- agencies/people to contact
- timescale for investigation

To help with planning the student will need access to a wide variety of sources of information. These may include:

- careers library
- resource centre/library
- careers service
- information databases eg. CAST computerised guidance system
- software guidance packages
- other agencies

3. The student should carry out the investigation as laid down in their plan in Outcome 2.

A range of investigation techniques which can be employed includes; questionnaires, visits to local industry/careers office/interviews - these may be taped, accessing computerised databases, telephone calls, watching videos.

The student should keep a log of the investigative activities they undertake. It would be advantageous for them to develop a contacts directory with times of opening, names and addresses etc.

The log will also be an integral part of the review in Outcome 4.

Students can report on their findings in a variety of ways.

- written paper-based project
- devise a display presentation (for use in careers library)
- make a video
- project report on tape

The information that the student produces could be used by future students not only who follow the module but who may be considering a similar type of career.

4. During the course of the module the student should review the findings of the investigation undertaken. This will often take place towards the end of the module, but the tutor should construct a framework that allows and encourages ongoing review through the planning investigative stages. While the review should be comprehensive of all the Outcomes, it should also allow the student (and the tutor where necessary) to ensure that each Outcome has been accurately achieved eg. in Outcome 3, that appropriate up-to-date sources of information have been used, and that sufficient detail for the purposes has been collected.

The student should be able to demonstrate clear understanding of the elements involved in making a career choice and of how skills and knowledge gained should be applied to future decision making and career planning.

The tutor should try to ensure that personal and familiar language is used by the student in the reviewing process rather than the "official language" of many of the resources and sources of information used. The student should also be encouraged to express personal feelings and preferences about their findings.

SUGGESTED LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

It is recommended that for effective delivery of this module, an integrated approach is adopted which involves a partnership between tutoring staff and careers personnel. Collaborative activity in the planning of the investigation into a career opportunity in a selected vocational area and in both learning and teaching approaches and assessment will be key features of effective module delivery.

It should be highlighted to students that the emphasis in the module is on developing skills related to investigating career opportunities, matching skills to job or course selection or information retrieval etc. which will be useful in investigating opportunities in a range of vocational areas if appropriate, rather than providing a definitive career choice. Students should be encouraged to investigate the opportunities outwith the period of the module if appropriate using the services of careers staff etc.

1. This Outcome centres on self-awareness and self-knowledge. A wide variety of resources are available which examine these topics and suggest a number of approaches.

The resources used should be relevant to the needs of the group and should also give the student the opportunity to work in small groups and/or individually.

Tutors should be aware that some students may find this area threatening, particularly the identification of strengths and weaknesses. Care should be taken at this stage, to encourage the student to be positive.

A number of different approaches can be used eg.

- case studies
- role plays
- written exercises
- questionnaires
- individual interviews
- discussion

- videos
- computerised guidance programs

to help students accurately identify skills, interests and abilities in relation to previous experience and performance.

Students who have previously taken other Guidance modules, eg. Options and Choices and Pre-Exit Guidance, may find it useful to use Review Sheets or Self-Assessment Sheets from those modules as a basis for Outcome 1.

2. It is more than likely that the investigation will be undertaken on an individual basis, however, where students have identified a common area of interest a group investigation could be developed.

It may be necessary at the start of planning activities to generate ideas of jobs/careers with students. A variety of class/group careers education activities could be used. Particular use could be made of activities designed to match qualities, abilities and interests to jobs/careers. For younger students, work on job families may prove beneficial.

Discussions regarding possible sources of information and how to access these would be beneficial. Using videos, inviting speakers in, particularly the careers officer, would be helpful at the planning stage. Reference should be made to the on-going work of the careers service in school/college.

Students may also want to make visits to places such as a careers library to obtain information to aid planning.

The student's plans should be discussed within groups/class and with the tutor prior to the investigation being carried out.

3. During the investigation, students should develop a variety of interpersonal skills, in approaching agencies, letter-writing telephoning/interviewing etc.

Students can be encouraged to share their experience/discuss common problems with the rest of the group at any time during the investigation.

The investigation will involve work outside class - this could be done during class time or in the student's own time depending on circumstances.

The tutor may want to discuss with individual/groups how they want to present their projects. The presentation of projects may become a group activity eg. if a display was being made for a careers/local library.

The tutor should act in a supportive role throughout the investigation and as appropriate liaise with the careers service.

4. The review should form an integral part of the learning process and should in no way be seen as merely a check on the sufficiency and accuracy of the investigation. It may be appropriate for some reviewing to be undertaken in groups at the discretion of the tutor and/or students. This approach can enable students to gain in confidence and experience through the feedback from others. Other parts of the review may be in the form of interim interviews between student and tutor. This is distinct from the personal interview which draws on evidence provided through review, planning and log sheets.
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GUIDANCE: INVESTIGATING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Test Specifications for Personal Interview

For Outcomes 1-4, the interviewer should:

1. use a combination of open and closed questions.
2. offer support and challenge as appropriate.
3. encourage the student to expand on his/her use of the information gained.
4. help the student to improve his/her self-awareness, particularly in relation to skills, abilities and interests.
5. use a range of skills eg. clarifying, enabling, reflecting, to help the student to see how the skills gained in this module can be used in considering career choices in the future.

In relation to Outcome 1 the interviewer should:

1. encourage the student to identify key elements in previous experience and performance.
2. help the student to ensure that his/her identification of strengths and weaknesses in previous experience and performance is accurate.
3. help the student to undertake realistic self-assessment in relation to his/her skills, interests and abilities, and produce an overview of this.

In relation to Outcome 2, the interviewer should:

1. question the student on the initial planning of the investigation, ensuring that this has taken account of his/her skills, interests and abilities.
2. ensure that the student has produced a general outline of his/her plan.
3. question the student on the sources of information which have been identified and establish that these are accurate.

4. question the student on the information which he/she has collected to aid planning and ensure that this information is relevant.
5. question the student on his/her final plan of action and ensure that this is detailed and realistic.

In relation to Outcome 3, the interviewer should:

1. question the student on his/her use of the information resources identified in Outcome 2 and ensure that these have been used correctly.
2. question the student on his/her record of the investigation procedures and ensure this is accurate.
3. question the student on the report on his/her findings and ensure that this report is detailed and accurate.

In relation to Outcome 4, the interviewer should:

1. question the student about the elements involved in making a career choice (eg. skills, abilities and interests) and ensure that these have been correctly identified.
2. encourage the student to give a clear explanation of the skills involved in planning his/her investigation into career opportunities.
3. assist the student to see how information retrieval skills can be used in future career choice.
4. encourage the student to assess how the learning gained in this investigation might affect future plans.

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