



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT PC Passport: Introduction to the Internet and On-line Communications (SCQF level 4)

CODE F1F9 10

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of PC Passport: Beginner but can also be undertaken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop basic skills in internet and online communications. This Unit covers conventional connection methods used to access, retrieve and exchange information from the internet or an intranet. Candidates will use basic facilities to send and receive messages over a network. Candidates will also acquire skills relating to computer hardware and software.

This Unit is suitable for anyone that wishes to develop basic internet/intranet and electronic communication skills.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Identify key components, terms and issues associated with the use of online communications.
- 2 Locate information using basic internet/intranet facilities.
- 3 Use e-mail and online forms to communicate electronically.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates had some experience of using a computer.

Administrative Information

Superclass: CB

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skill:

- ◆ Information Technology (SCQF level 4)

This opportunity is highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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.

OUTCOME 1

Identify key components, terms and issues associated with the use of online communications.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the basic components of internet/intranet connection.
- (b) Identify key terms used when working with online communications.
- (c) Identify different methods of locating information.
- (d) Identify e-mail problems and solutions.
- (e) Identify different types of electronic communication methods.
- (f) Identify security risks and relevant laws and guidelines.

OUTCOME 2

Locate information using basic internet/intranet facilities.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Access websites correctly using supplied Uniform Resource Locators (URLs).
- (b) Locate and download information on a specific topic using search engines.
- (c) Record web addresses using bookmarks/favourites.
- (d) Navigate a website using browser controls and hyperlinks.
- (e) Re-visit websites using history facilities.

OUTCOME 3

Use e-mail and online forms to communicate electronically.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Create and reply to e-mails effectively, securely and responsibly.
- (b) Create and send e-mails with attachments and URLs/Web links.
- (c) Save received attachments to a computer.
- (d) Create and use electronic address book facilities.
- (e) Complete online forms correctly.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Candidates are encouraged to use the internet in any research, etc however the evidence produced must be the candidate's own words. Assessors should assure themselves of the authenticity of candidate's evidence.

Written and/or oral recorded evidence and performance evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved the requirements of all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcome 1 to the standard specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. The evidence for this Outcome should be obtained under controlled, supervised conditions. The assessment will be closed-book and should last no more than 45 minutes.

The instrument of assessment will provide opportunities for each of the Outcomes to be fulfilled by means of sampling across the range of the content of Outcome 1. Where re-assessment is required, it should contain a different sample across the range of content of the Outcome. Achievement can be decided by use of a cut-off score. Each sample must include the following:

- ◆ Two basic components of an internet/intranet connection.
- ◆ Four basic terms relating to any of the following: computer hardware, computer software, internet/intranet and e-mail.
- ◆ Two different methods of locating information.
- ◆ Two basic e-mail problems and one solution to e-mail problem.
- ◆ Two different types of electronic communication (eg instant messaging, internet telephony, forums, etc).
- ◆ One security risk when using online communications.
- ◆ One current law/guideline about using the internet and online communications.

Performance evidence supplemented by an assessor observation checklist is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcomes 2 and 3 to the standard specified in the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. This evidence will be gathered under supervised open-book conditions. The evidence may be produced over an extended period of time.

Candidates are required to demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ Locate two different types of information (eg text, numbers or graphics) using the internet or intranet on at least two separate occasions. The information located and method used for location must be different on each assessment occasion.
- ◆ Access two different websites using URLs and one other search method.
- ◆ Use each of the following on at least one occasion: bookmarks or favourites, browser controls, hyperlinks and history facilities.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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- ◆ Use e-mail on at least one occasion for each of the following: send e-mails to individuals and more than one person, reply to e-mails using the commands forward, reply to individuals, reply to all.
- ◆ Create and use an e-mail address book.
- ◆ Complete an online form.

All these activities must be completed responsibly and with due regard to 'netiquette'.

In addition candidates are required to provide:

- ◆ Written and/or oral recorded evidence of the search criteria, method used and the location of the information.
- ◆ Copies of:
 - one e-mail containing an attachment.
 - one e-mail to multiple recipients.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment materials including assessor checklists, practical tasks and an instrument of assessment for the knowledge and understanding of Outcome 1. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes 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

This Unit may be delivered as a stand-alone Unit or in combination with other Units as part of a group of Units making up an award, eg PC Passport: Beginner.

This Unit maps to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for IT Users as specified by the Sector Skills Council (e-Skills UK). The competences included in this Unit map to level 1 Areas of Competence in the following areas of NOS:

- ◆ Internets and Intranets
- ◆ Use IT to Exchange Information

Full assessment coverage of NOS is detailed in the Assessment Support Pack for this Unit. Further information regarding NOS can be found at www.e-skills.com.

Corresponding to Outcomes 1–3

The term ‘internet’ is used to represent the full range of internet services which includes the World Wide Web, e-mail, file transfer, newsgroups and chat.

Throughout this Unit the candidate will develop effective use of hardware and software relating to online connections. At this level the speed of completion of the tasks is not the overriding concern. However, candidates are required to complete the defined tasks without assistance. Candidates should be aware that the operating system is the mechanism that allows users to connect to online services. The use of the operating system should be quite basic, eg candidates are required to use the operating system to load and exit a browser application. In the use of the internet software, the candidates should be able to navigate the application and use the basic facilities effectively but not, necessarily, efficiently. Candidates should be able to open and close a browser, save a webpage, save individual components of a webpage in appropriate formats and print a webpage without assistance. Similarly, in the use of the e-mail software, the candidates should be able to send and receive e-mails effectively.

Outcome 1

The aim of this Outcome is to develop an understanding of basic components and communication techniques in order to utilise online communications. Candidates are introduced to components of the internet, intranet and e-mail connections. Such as:

- ◆ Internet Service Provider (ISP)
- ◆ a communication link eg telephone line or network cable
- ◆ an internet access device eg PC connected directly or indirectly to the internet
- ◆ a valid user account

National Unit Specification: support notes cont)

UNIT PC Passport: Introduction to the Internet and On-line Communications (SCQF level 4)

Candidates are expected to develop a basic technical vocabulary relating to computer hardware, computer software, internet/intranet and e-mail. However, only the most common terms are covered by this Unit for example search, download, save, print, hyperlink, home page, offline, online, browsers, World Wide Web, e-mail, file transfer, URLs, etc.

Search engines are used to locate and download information. Candidates should be introduced to browser features that allow efficient searching of information eg bookmarks/favourites, Boolean operators, etc.

Basic e-mail problems should include viruses, worms and e-mail spam and the risks related to e-mails from unknown users and downloads. Candidates should also be made aware of:

- ◆ The methods of protecting their computers by using anti-virus software and anti-spam software.
- ◆ The provisions of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

In relation to current communication methods, candidates should be introduced to instant messaging, internet phones and forums. Candidates are expected to develop a basic awareness of the security risks of using the internet, intranet and e-mail which include hacking, viruses, worms and spam and have knowledge of the Computer Misuse Act, Copyright, Design and Patents Act and Data Protection Act.

Outcome 2

The aim of this Outcome is to develop ability to locate information on the internet or an intranet. The type of information that candidates are expected to locate should be simple and familiar, and preferably relate to their personal and vocational interests.

Candidates are required to enter valid URLs and should become proficient at locating a range of websites given their URLs. Candidates are also required to use basic search facilities to locate and download information. It is only required that basic search facilities are used. For example, most search engines provide a simple front-end and candidates are required to use this interface to perform basic searches. Candidates should locate and download a range of information types — text, number and graphic. Candidates are expected to select appropriate keywords. Searches should typically consist of two or more keywords.

Web browsers provide simple facilities to record URLs and candidates are required to use these facilities to record website addresses. At this level, there is no requirement for candidates to organise the bookmarks or favourites (into folders and sub-folders). However, candidates must be able to locate previously visited sites using their saved addresses.

Candidates are expected to be familiar with browser navigation controls (such as the back and forward buttons) and be able to use them to move between pages in a website. Similarly, candidates are required to recognise and use embedded hyperlinks. The combined use of browser controls and hyperlinks should enable candidates to effectively navigate a specific website.

National Unit Specification: support notes cont)

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The history facility which allows candidates to re-visit websites should be introduced and candidates should become familiar with the purpose of the history feature. Candidates should be able to locate a website, on their own, if that site has previously been visited and the associated URL has been stored in the history log.

Outcome 3

The aim of this Outcome is to develop communication skills in using the internet or intranet to send and receive e-mail.

Candidates should be aware of acceptable use policies for communicating over the internet and intranet. Most centres will have an acceptable use policy and candidates are required to adhere to this. Responsible use also relates to the candidate's conduct whilst they are online.

Candidates should be able to use e-mail etc to achieve a specific purpose eg to send an e-mail to a friend without assistance. Candidates should be able to create an e-mail of different formats eg a message with different colours, fonts and a bulleted list and an attachment. Candidates should also be able to open an attachment that has been sent to them and save it in an appropriate place. They should also be able to create and use an e-mail address book. In addition candidates are expected to be familiar with completing online forms for example order forms, information request forms, etc. A centre may also wish to set up web surveys for the candidates to complete.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

A practical, hands-on approach to learning should be adopted throughout this Unit. The emphasis should be on experiential learning. Terminology and underpinning knowledge should be introduced in a practical context.

The actual distribution of time between Outcomes is at the discretion of the centre. However, the following distribution and order is suggested:

Outcome 1	12 hours
Outcome 2	14 hours
Outcome 3	14 hours

The allocated timings allow for assessment and re-assessment where required.

Throughout this Unit, candidate activities should relate to their personal or vocational interests. For example, candidates should be permitted to search for information which reflects their interests rather than searches prescribed by their assessor. Their choice of search should be genuine (rather than contrived) and seek to gain some valid information on a topic of genuine interest to the candidate.

While online communication methods can be covered as theory, it is suggested that opportunities for practical application are provided to make this more interesting for candidates. For example the internet can be used as a research tool to enable candidates to search for information on the current communication methods.

National Unit Specification: support notes cont)

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

This Unit involves candidates using the internet or an intranet to perform searches for information which may provide an opportunity to gather evidence towards aspects of the IT Core Skill.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

It may be appropriate for some of the evidence for this Unit to be produced using e-assessment provided the national standard is applied and the conditions of assessment are consistent for all candidates. This may take the form of e-testing (for knowledge and understanding) and/or e-portfolios (for practical abilities).

If a centre is presenting Outcome 1 of these assessments online the following assessment methods, where appropriate, may be selected:

- ◆ Multiple choice
- ◆ Drag and drop
- ◆ Multiple response
- ◆ Mix and match
- ◆ a combination of the above

It is expected that the questions will be of the multiple-choice variety. Centres may consider the use of alternative questions types, particularly if using Computer Assisted Assessment approaches. However, care should be taken that the questions are valid and at an appropriate level. The use of simple true/false question responses is unlikely to achieve this.

The Assessment Support Pack for this Unit provides sample assessment material. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

For Outcome 1 a suitable assessment would be an objective test which demonstrates that the candidate has the required knowledge. The evidence for this Outcome should be obtained under controlled, supervised conditions. The assessment should be closed-book. Achievement could be decided using a cut-off score.

Where re-assessment of knowledge and understanding is required the questions presented to the candidate must be different on each assessment occasion.

There is an opportunity to use an online assessment environment for knowledge and understanding of Outcome 1.

If possible, at least one of the searches in Outcome 2 should be for a genuine reason and not contrived.

National Unit Specification: support notes cont)

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The assessment of practical skills throughout this Unit may be demonstrated in the context of a single extended task, or in the context of a number of smaller tasks. The candidate will normally demonstrate the skills during the teaching and learning activities of the Unit, rather than as separate assessment activities.

Evidence of practical competence can be stored in a portfolio. On completion of this Unit the portfolio should contain a range of evidence drawn from the Evidence Requirements for each Outcome.

The assessor may wish to store candidate evidence electronically which may include saving to the candidate's e-portfolio.

If this Unit is undertaken in the workplace there may be opportunities for candidates to gather evidence in day to day workplace activities.

Opportunities for the use of 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 e-checklists. 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. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

DISABLED CANDIDATES AND/OR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (www.sqa.org.uk)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes cont)

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Version	Description of change	Date
02	Evidence Requirements clarified and/or details of NOS mapping inserted	10/08/2010