

National Unit Specification: general information



UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

CODE F59S 11

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to provide the candidate with practical experience and theoretical knowledge of the administrative systems and services central to the effective working of a modern office. Candidates are expected to have hands-on experience of key pieces of office equipment and thus develop a knowledge and understanding of their use and appropriate application.

This Unit should assist the candidate in the preparation for *Administrative Services Higher* (SCQF level 6) and *Administrative Procedures* (SCQF level 6).

OUTCOMES

- 1 Record, store and supply information.
- 2 Process mail using appropriate services and equipment.
- 3 Use office print services effectively.
- 4 Understand the appropriate use of emerging technologies.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the Centre.

Administrative Information

Superclass: AY

Publication date: November 2008

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2008

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit Specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre, telephone 0845 279 1000.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

**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.

This Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Problem Solving (SCQF level 3)
- ◆ Information Technology (SCQF level 3)

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of the Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

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

Record, store and supply information.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly identify equipment and classification systems used in manual and electronic filing systems and according to current guidelines.
- (b) Accurately record and store information using existing manual and electronic systems.
- (c) Retrieve and supply information from existing manual and electronic systems.

OUTCOME 2

Process mail using appropriate services and equipment.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Prepare mail for posting and select the most appropriate mail service.
- (b) Use mailroom equipment to process outgoing mail
- (c) Identify procedures for processing incoming mail

OUTCOME 3

Use office print services effectively.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Use a scanner to produce images for use in an office environment.
- (b) Identify the functions of a photocopier and use them to produce a variety of documents.
- (c) Identify the information required to be able to use office print services effectively.
- (d) Identify the legal issues to be taken into account when using office print services.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

OUTCOME 4

Understand the appropriate use of emerging technologies.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the functions and benefits of an Intranet in an organisation.
- (b) Describe how the use of mobile technologies can enhance modern working practices.
- (c) Describe the advantages and disadvantages of networks and wireless technologies in an organisation.
- (d) Describe how emerging technologies can be used in a modern office.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The evidence required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for the Unit can be written or oral.

This theoretical section of this Unit lends itself to being assessed by short answer questions under timed supervised closed-book conditions. Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut-off score.

Where candidates fail to reach the agreed threshold score, re-assessment should follow using an alternative instrument of assessment.

The practical aspects should be evidenced by an assessor observation checklist showing the candidate has completed the relevant practical task to the appropriate standard and a candidate logbook should be used throughout the Unit. These tasks must be carried out under supervised controlled conditions. Candidates can have access to notes and reference books.

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.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

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 is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate Group Award in Administration at SCQF level 5 but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is set in the context of the modern business environment and candidates are expected to develop a knowledge and understanding of administrative procedures and practices throughout their learning. Candidates are expected to have hands-on experience of key pieces of office equipment and thus develop a knowledge and understanding of their use and appropriate application.

As this Unit is designed to provide the candidate with practical experience and theoretical knowledge of the administrative systems and services central to the effective working of a modern office, it would be appropriate to use a simulated office as a tool for learning.

If appropriate, this Unit could also be integrated with other Units in the NC Administration Award eg *Managing Time and Resources, Word Processing, Front Office*.

Effective use can also be made of blended learning materials such as NLN to offer practical exercises to the candidate.

Centres should also be encouraged to visit work environments to help support the practical aspect eg Royal Mail centres, a print room and could be shown active Intranets. In addition students may be able to use webcams, video conferencing, use of Blogs, Wikis etc and emerging technologies. Mobile phone companies could be invited to demonstrate their products. Many aspects of this Unit could also be covered during a work experience.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Realistic materials and documentation should be used throughout the Unit and a thematic approach adopted where possible — using a simulated office could facilitate this. Integrating this Unit with other Units in the NC Administration award could provide more realistic scenarios.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

Outcome 1

Candidates should be introduced to:

- ◆ methods of pre-sorting filing
- ◆ filing systems and procedures
- ◆ the main filing classification systems used — alphabetical (by name, location or subject), numerical, and relevant rules which should be followed
- ◆ indexing systems
- ◆ the main storage cabinets used — lateral and vertical
- ◆ the main storage products — ring binders, lever arch files, box files, document wallets, file folders, expanding wallets, dividers
- ◆ organisational procedures for retention and security
- ◆ computerised filing — the advantages and disadvantages compared to paperbased
- ◆ legal requirements in providing information eg Data Protection Act — how this is monitored, what information they are allowed to provide and the penalties for infringement

Candidates could combine manual and computerised systems eg use a database to index a manual numerical system.

Outcome 2

Candidates should be introduced to mail room equipment and services and given a variety of mail examples to prepare for posting eg

- ◆ correctly fold letters
- ◆ address appropriate sized envelopes according to Royal Mail guidelines
- ◆ use the Internet to select the appropriate mail services
- ◆ use scales and a franking machine correctly
- ◆ complete the paperwork for recorded and special delivery mail and understand the difference between them

Candidates should be aware of procedures for dealing with incoming mail, methods of sorting and distributing incoming mail.

Candidates should also have a knowledge of private mail companies and the services they offer — perhaps make a comparison between them and Royal Mail.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

Outcome 3

Candidates should be introduced to print services as a function in an office and the information required by the Print Room in order to provide an effective service. Candidates should be made aware of the legal issues to be considered when scanning and photocopying eg copyright.

Candidates should be able to use a scanner — ideally both stand alone and integrated. Candidates should be able to manipulate the image and save appropriately for later use ie insert into a document or attach to an e-mail.

Candidates should be able to use a photocopier to produce:

- ◆ multiple copies both collated and stacked, both stapled and loose
- ◆ back to back copies
- ◆ reduce copies
- ◆ enlarge copies

Candidates should also have knowledge of the various kinds of binding machines and laminators available to the workplace and be able to use any of them where possible.

Candidates should be made aware of the appropriate legal requirements when making copies eg Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 — what they are allowed to copy and the penalties of infringement and the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) and its role. Accessing the CLA website would provide valuable up to date information.

Outcome 4

Where possible candidates should be shown the college Intranet to help with their understanding of its application and use.

Candidates should be introduced to the various mobile technologies on offer eg Blackberries and how they can enhance working practice in the modern office.

Networks and wireless technologies should be explored and the advantages and disadvantages discussed.

Emerging technologies and their application in the workplace should be discussed and investigated using the Internet. This can include technologies such as YouTube, Wikis and Blogs as well as other technologies as they arise.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Central Services (SCQF level 5)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

There are no opportunities for Core Skill development in this Unit.

It is envisaged that candidates will be able to develop aspects of the Core Skills in *Problem Solving* and *Information Technology* at level 3.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit is set in the context of the modern business environment and candidates are expected to develop a knowledge and understanding of administrative procedures and practices throughout their learning. Candidates are expected to have hands-on experience of key pieces of office equipment and thus develop a knowledge and understanding of their use and appropriate application.

As this Unit is designed to provide the candidate with practical experience and theoretical knowledge of the administrative systems and services central to the effective working of a modern office, it would be appropriate to use a simulated office as a tool for learning and the practical assessments.

If appropriate, this Unit could also be integrated with other Units in the NC Administration Award eg *Managing Time and Resources, Word Processing, Front Office*.

Reference should be made to the Assessment Support Pack available for this Unit.

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 communications 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)*.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR 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)*.