



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT British Sign Language (BSL): An Introduction (SCQF level 3)

CODE F8Y0 09

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop basic proficiency in British Sign Language (BSL). It will enable them to use BSL in simple situations to produce, respond to and receive communication about everyday personal matters.

This Unit is a free-standing National Unit.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Produce personal information for users of British Sign Language
- 2 Respond to personal information produced by users of British Sign Language
- 3 Receive information from simple presentations in British Sign Language

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would be expected to demonstrate an interest in learning British Sign Language.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 3 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 3*).

**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.*

Administrative Information

Superclass: HG

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CORE SKILLS

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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

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

Produce personal information for users of British Sign Language.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Use suitable forms of greeting and leave taking
- (b) Produce personal information which is clear and is understood by a sympathetic BSL user
- (c) Produce personal information following the structure of BSL

OUTCOME 2

Respond to personal information produced by users of British Sign Language.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Responses are understood by a sympathetic BSL user
- (b) Responses follow the structure of BSL
- (c) Responses include asking for clarification

OUTCOME 3

Receive information from simple presentations in British Sign Language.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly identify the purpose of the presentation
- (b) Correctly answer questions on the content of the information received from the presentation

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should provide evidence to meet the requirements of all three Outcomes and all Performance Criteria. The assessment will take place at appropriate times throughout the Unit.

Outcome 1 — Performance Evidence

For this Outcome, candidates should produce information to a sympathetic BSL user in a one-to-one situation lasting about a minute. Candidates should use simple sentences with frequently used words. Candidates may be prompted if necessary to produce suitable information.

Candidates should produce personal information. It should cover personal details and personal activities. The information produced may involve some hesitation and some inaccuracy.

Candidates should produce information on each of the following personal details: name; age (exact age or 'over 21' if preferred); home town; country of origin/nationality; family and/or friends.

Candidates should produce items of information on two different personal activities. These would depend on the candidate's circumstances. Suitable personal activities could be leisure activities; food and drink; hobbies; occupation (eg job title, activities at work); holidays.

The information given should include colour, number and days of the week. This can be given in relation to either personal details or day to day activities. One example of each should be produced.

An assessor checklist will be used to record candidate evidence.

Outcome 2 — Performance Evidence

For this Outcome, candidates should respond to information produced by a sympathetic BSL user in a one-to-one situation lasting about a minute. Information presented to them should use simple sentences with frequently used words. The subject matter should be appropriate for informal social situations and could take the form of brief story covering personal information and/or personal activities such as leisure time or holidays.

The one to one situation should be carried out in a way which ensures that candidates are able to respond in a manner appropriate to BSL (eg by facial expression or by giving a reply). It should also give candidates an opportunity to clarify information they have been given.

Candidates can be helped to respond by prompting if necessary. The responses by the candidate may involve some hesitation and some inaccuracy.

An assessor checklist will be used to record candidate evidence.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

For this Outcome, candidates should be presented with personal, factual and instructional information. For each type of information the presentation should last about one minute. The presentations should be accessible to candidates and have a limited range and vocabulary. They should use simple sentences and frequently used words.

Candidates should correctly answer three short answer questions for each situation. The situations will cover the personal, factual and instructional information they have been given in the presentations. The questions should be given to candidates before they have seen the presentation. It is acceptable for candidates to see the presentation on two occasions before being given the questions. They should also identify the purpose of the presentation.

Candidates may provide answers in writing or by signing or any other suitable method.

An assessor checklist will be used to record candidate evidence.

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 is designed for learners who are new to British Sign Language (BSL) and who wish to gain some basic proficiency in the language. It aims to help candidates to use BSL to deal with everyday social situations. It is the first in a series of Units covering different levels of BSL.

The Unit is intended to help candidates acquire basic production and reception skills in BSL. It seeks to help learners develop a BSL vocabulary which will enable them to produce and receive personal information and information about common personal activities such as shopping, leisure pursuits, hobbies and work or College. It is expected at this level that learners will make some mistakes and will hesitate when using BSL. It is expected also that they will use simple sentences and everyday words.

Nevertheless, candidates should be able to master some fixed phrases and be able to successfully manage situations such as greeting someone and saying goodbye. They should have gained experience of aspects of BSL such as: time/number; finger spelling; facial expression; non-manual features; body language; hand shapes; placement; variations of signs in context; appropriate word order; regional variations.

Candidates should also be able to recognise that there will be occasions when they will be exposed to situations beyond their grasp. This Unit will help them to fall back on those language skills which are within the abilities that they have developed. Ideally, this should encourage them to continue with BSL and pursue their work at more advanced levels.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Learning and teaching approaches should try to provide candidates with an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience. There is great scope in this Unit for practical work which can help to gain and maintain the interest and enthusiasm of candidates. In addition, it is possible in this Unit to integrate assessment into the normal learning and teaching processes. Planning the learning experience should try to take account of this.

The Unit is about learning BSL and, wherever possible, the learning and teaching process should be carried out using BSL. Establishing BSL as the medium for learning means that learners are forced to work with the language in a real situation. It can also motivate learners to succeed as their ability to communicate depends on them gaining some proficiency in BSL. In addition, it helps learners to recognise that production and reception skills go together. The Outcomes in this Unit deal with them separately but, in practice, they cannot easily be kept apart.

Initially the learning and teaching can concentrate on getting learners to watch and react appropriately. As learners come to grips with the basic notions of BSL, they can be encouraged to use it to communicate.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Tutors can play an important role in encouraging learners not to be afraid of making mistakes or of misunderstanding communications from others. The tutor can use these sympathetically as a way of illustrating both what BSL requires and how learners can improve.

For this Unit, learning and teaching should focus on personal information and common occasions with which candidates will be very familiar. Candidates can work with others to develop their skills. They can share personal and family information such as details of family members (ages of children, name of partner, what parents do), information about where they live, what they do and so on. Candidates who can tell jokes could practise BSL by telling them to others.

There are many learning and teaching techniques which tutors can use. For example, candidates can participate in role plays among themselves which deal with everyday situations that people encounter such as shopping, eating in a restaurant or going to the cinema. Tutors could make use of cue cards as a stimulus for role plays, especially in the early stages of the learning process. There is scope also to make use of quizzes (eg where candidates are asked questions in BSL and have to provide the answer.) These could be done in small teams especially in the early stages of the learning and teaching process. Tutors could also use simple games such as where candidates are asked to guess the meaning from a context.

Candidates could watch suitable video material as well as producing information for and responding to other users of BSL. Tutors may also find it helpful on occasions to invite experienced BSL users to classes. These people, for example, could be former students and they give candidates a wider learning experience as well as helping to motivate candidates to succeed.

Tutors should encourage learners to develop useful strategies in BSL including:

- ◆ guessing meaning from the context in order to anticipate what will follow in the next sentence
- ◆ conveying emphasis and meaning through non-manual gestures
- ◆ rephrasing
- ◆ trying to understand new signs on the basis of non-manual features and context
- ◆ knowing how to ask for help in BSL when having difficulties in communicating

Candidates should be given as much time for practice as possible. They should be encouraged to seek feedback on how they are progressing and to make use of it to improve their skills. There is no requirement in this Unit to use video for assessment but video can be a useful learning and teaching tool. There are benefits in introducing candidates to video in this Unit if there is time to do so. It does enable them to see themselves using BSL and this can be a powerful learning experience. It also helps to make candidates more comfortable with the use of video. Candidates who move on to later BSL Units may thus be in a better position to cope with the video assessment in these Units.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill component in this Unit. However, there may be opportunities for developing the Core Skills components of *Working with Others* — Working Co-operatively with Others and *Working with Others* — Reviewing Co-operative Contribution at SCQF level 3.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Working with Others — Working Co-operatively with Others

The learning and teaching processes for this Unit are very likely to involve candidates working with each other to practise British Sign Language. This will require candidates to show consideration to the needs of others and to respond appropriately to the needs and wishes of others.

Working with Others — Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

As mentioned above, the learning and teaching processes are very likely to involve candidates working with other to practise British Sign Language. In order to learn from their practising and improve their skills, candidates will have to review their own contribution and consider feedback and advice on what they have done.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Each of the three Outcomes in the Unit can be assessed separately.

However, Outcomes 1 and 2 could be combined into a single assessment. Where Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 are combined the one to one situation can last longer than a minute and may be up to two minutes if needed. If the first two Outcomes are combined, the one to one situation may take the form of a simple conversation between the candidate and the other participant.

For both Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, the one to one situation can be between the candidate and another participant. This other participant can be the tutor or another BSL user. The other participant should act sympathetically towards the candidate and take account of the stage of learning which the candidate has reached. It is acceptable to help the candidate by prompting them if this is needed.

For Outcome 1, the candidate may be asked questions to make sure s/he produces all the required information. If candidates can produce all the required information without assistance, there is no need to ask questions or prompt the candidate. It would be expected in Outcome 1 that the candidate would take the lead in the one to one situation.

For Outcome 2, assessment is likely to be easier to carry out if the other participant takes the lead in the one to one situation. The other participant may produce some information and wait until the candidate responds, eg by seeking clarification or by showing a suitable facial expression. However, it may help candidates if the other participant deliberately seeks a response from the candidate. This could be done, for example, by asking a question or by checking whether the candidate has understood. The subject matter for Outcome 2 should be something with which the candidate is familiar. The other participant could describe something they have done, eg going shopping, going on holiday, a leisure activity they have undertaken such as visiting the cinema or eating at a restaurant. The content could be presented in the form of a story and it could be told in a manner which is designed to provoke a reaction such as surprise or laughter. In this Outcome, there is an opportunity to extend the range of language and the vocabulary from that used in Outcome 1.

For Outcome 3 candidates should be presented with three different situations from each of which they should receive information. The three situations should cover a personal experience, factual information and an instructional item. Each should last about a minute.

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If desired the presentations may be combined into a single presentation lasting about 3 minutes. If this approach is adopted, all the questions will have to be asked at the end of the presentation. Tutors who take this option should be confident that candidates will be able to cope with being given all the questions together.

The presentations may be made by the tutor or by another BSL user. Alternatively, candidates may be shown a video presentation. The same method can be used for all three presentations. However, it is acceptable to use more than one method of presentation. Candidates may be given the presentation on two occasions prior to answering questions. Once candidates have watched the presentation, they should be given three questions on the content. These questions should be simple restricted response, ie require short answers which could be one word only. Candidates may provide answers in writing or by signing or by any other suitable method. Candidates should also be asked to identify the purpose of the presentation. Again, a short answer communicated in any form suitable to the candidate is acceptable.

Presentations on personal experience could include stories about holidays, shopping or other familiar activities. Factual presentations could be about menus or facilities which candidates might use. Instructional items should be simple and may be a recipe, drawing a plan of a room, giving directions using a map and so on.

Video assessment is not required for this Unit. Assessment for the Unit can be recorded using checklists. These checklists can list the requirements which the candidate has to meet for each Outcome and the tutor/assessor can tick to show that each requirement has been met. Good practice is that the checklists should have space for comment by the tutor/assessor and should be signed by the tutor/assessor. Where candidates do not succeed in an assessment on the first occasion, they should be given an opportunity for re-assessment. Checklists should be retained for external verification.

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 whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Amendment to evidence requirements. Confirmation that candidates should be given questions prior to seeing the presentation.	04/03/2013