



## National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Volunteering Experience (SCQF level 5)

**Unit code:** FR27 11

**Superclass:** PM

**Publication date:** August 2011

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**Version:** 01

## Summary

The purpose of this Unit is to enable candidates to apply and develop their skills and knowledge in a volunteering capacity. Candidates will review and reflect on their own skills during and after their volunteering experience and on the impact that their experience has had on themselves, the organisation and its clients, or the environment.

The Unit is suitable for a range of candidates. These could be school and college candidates, people wishing to develop and improve their employability skills in preparation for seeking work, or people seeking to improve other skills and learn through volunteering. School and college candidates undertaking this award are likely to be undertaking some type of volunteering as part of their overall learning experience. It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing this Unit will be able to progress to further study or volunteering work.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Award in *Volunteering Skills* at SCQF level 5 but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

## Outcomes

- 1 Participate fully in the work of a Volunteer Involving Organisation as a volunteer whilst showing awareness of the roles and responsibilities of others in the VIO.
- 2 Review the impact of the contribution in the volunteering role with reference to its impact on the volunteer, the organisation and its clients/the environment.

## National Unit specification: general information (cont)

**Unit title:** Volunteering Experience

### Recommended entry

There are no specific entry requirements for this Unit, and entry is at the discretion of the centre. The Unit is suitable for candidates who have no previous experience of volunteering, or for those who already have some volunteering experience. It would be beneficial for candidates to have completed the National Unit *Preparing to Volunteer* (SCQF level 5) or have equivalent experience. Communication skills at SCQF level 4 would be beneficial.

### Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (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

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 components in this Unit.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Volunteering Experience

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**

Participate fully in the work of a Volunteer Involving Organisation as a volunteer whilst showing awareness of the roles and responsibilities of others in the VIO.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Describe the purpose of a Volunteer Involving Organisation and the roles and responsibilities of its members.
- (b) Participate as a volunteer in a selected Volunteer Involving Organisation.
- (c) Contribute to the work of the Volunteer Involving Organisation by carrying out pre-agreed tasks.
- (d) Carry out a skills/qualities/attributes analysis before and during a volunteering placement which can be applied in the pre-agreed tasks.

#### **Outcome 2**

Review the impact of the contribution in the volunteering role with reference to its impact on the volunteer, the organisation and its clients/the environment.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Review the extent to which goals and aims of the pre-agreed task have been carried out.
- (b) Review the impact the experience has had on the skills, qualities and attributes of the volunteer with reference to the agreed tasks.
- (c) Evaluate the impact of the contribution made to the Volunteer Involving Organisation and its clients during the volunteering experience.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Volunteering Experience

### **Evidence Requirements for this Unit**

Written and/or oral recorded evidence and performance evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes to the standard specified in the Performance Criteria. The evidence will be generated under open-book conditions by the candidate at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

#### **Outcome 1**

Performance evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has participated in a volunteering experience as specified in the Performance Criteria.

Additional written and/or oral recorded evidence is required which will include:

- ◆ a description of the aims of the VIO, and the principal roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers
- ◆ a description of the candidate's experience and contribution whilst on placement and carrying out of the pre-agreed task
- ◆ a self assessment identifying at least three skills/qualities/attributes that the candidate will develop during the placement.

#### **Outcome 2**

Written and/or recorded oral evidence covering:

- ◆ a detailed review of the candidate's own performance in relation to the pre-agreed task identifying strengths and weaknesses and drawing conclusions on how this contributes to the goals and aims
- ◆ review of the skills/qualities/attributes identified in Outcome 1 and a detailed reflection on how the candidate has developed these during the placement experience
- ◆ a detailed description of at least two ways in which the candidate's experience has impacted on the VIO justified with supporting evidence
- ◆ a detailed review of at least two ways in which the placement has impacted on the candidate and how the value of the experience gained relates to future volunteering goals
- ◆ a detailed description of at least two ways in which the placement has impacted on the VIO's clients or the environment.

**Note — Evidence can be holistic or Outcome by Outcome.**

## **National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit Title: Volunteering Experience**

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**

The Unit will give individuals the opportunity to gain a national qualification which recognises their contribution to volunteering and the learning they gain as a result of being involved in activities additional to their formal learning. The Unit will link naturally to the development of essential skills, employability skills, transferable skills, active citizenship and the development of the skills and attributes of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence (to enable candidates to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors).

In this Unit candidates will apply and develop their own skills, knowledge or attributes in a volunteering capacity on a placement. This would normally be for a minimum of 20 hours although tutors may use their professional judgement in cases where the placement is less than 20 hours but sufficiently complex to accredit as equivalent. This time should include fulfilment of at least one pre-agreed task (negotiated between the candidate and the VIO) to allow the candidate opportunity for specific achievement and reflection.

Placements may occur in a range of VIOs: voluntary organisations, private companies or statutory organisations. Tutors should ensure that appropriate support is available to the candidate whilst on placement and that their institutions' own policies on health and safety and disclosure are adhered to.

Candidates will review their own skills, knowledge and attributes before, during and after their volunteering experience and evaluate the impact of their placement on the VIO, on themselves, the VIO, its clients or the environment. The identification of appropriate skills, knowledge or attributes, as well as the selection of a suitable volunteering placement would be supported by the completion of the *Preparing to Volunteer* Unit at SCQF level 5.

In addition to the above, Unit delivery should develop awareness of the following considerations: Disclosure checks and Risk Assessment.

### **Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit**

This Unit lends itself naturally to a holistic approach, though tutors may, if desired, approach it Outcome by Outcome. A balance between a tutor led and a candidate centred approach should be adopted throughout this Unit. Some support for candidates with planning and preparation for placement may be required at this level.

It should be noted that volunteering has a cultural context and for students/learners of other nationalities, there may be no similar context of volunteering or it may have very different connotations which may prove to be a barrier to inclusion. Where this is the case, learning and teaching approaches should address these issues to ensure understanding prior to assessment tasks being undertaken.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit Title: Volunteering Experience

Aspects of this Unit could be integrated with delivery of Core Skills in *Communication, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving*.

Corresponding to Outcome 1, learning and teaching activities may include:

- ◆ small group discussions on expectations and responsibilities
- ◆ input from guest speakers such as existing volunteers and volunteer co-ordinators about their placement experiences
- ◆ meetings or other correspondence with VIOs to agree appropriate tasks for candidates to carry out during the placement experience
- ◆ conducting interviews or desk research on aims of VIOs and roles and responsibilities
- ◆ class discussions on different methods of gathering assessment evidence, eg video, e-portfolios, interviews, log books, blogs followed by appropriate support
- ◆ use of internet to study useful volunteering websites and volunteering case studies, eg [www.volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk) and use of volunteering DVD and toolkit at [www.learningbyvolunteering.org.uk](http://www.learningbyvolunteering.org.uk)
- ◆ completing a self-assessment template
- ◆ simulation and role play on how to deal with situations that might arise on placement.

Corresponding to Outcome 2, learning activities may include:

- ◆ keeping a reflective and evaluative log/blog on the experience as it progresses
- ◆ an exercise on how to write evaluatively
- ◆ one to one interviews (or questionnaires) with tutors, placement supervisors/mentors or fellow volunteers on progress and impact of personal contributions to the VIO and its clients/the environment with the option of additional evidence being provided through records of these interviews
- ◆ reviewing own placement experience records to identify where skills/qualities/attributes were demonstrated and consider points for reflection from the volunteering experience
- ◆ a personal reflection and evaluation activity to review the overall placement, analyse the value of the experience and how skills may be utilised in future volunteering opportunities.

The Unit should provide candidates with an opportunity to develop the following skills for life, learning and work:

- ◆ Self awareness and improvement — by carrying out a self assessment, measuring own performance and anticipating how the experience can help them in the future;
- ◆ Citizenship — by understanding the aims of VIOs, becoming aware of the roles of individuals and participating in the activities of a VIO;
- ◆ Confidence — by seeing how participation benefits self, others and the community/environment and can contribute to future skills sets and future volunteering opportunities;
- ◆ Self Management — by participating in the VIO, planning tasks and fulfilling organisational requirements;
- ◆ Community Involvement — by working with the VIO's community and making an impact on that community;

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit Title: Volunteering Experience

- ◆ Independent thinking and informed decision making — by negotiating tasks, making decisions about own skills/qualities/attributes and decisions whilst on placement and formulating how these skills can be of benefit in the future;
- ◆ Appreciation of values and beliefs — by understanding the work of the VIO and seeing how contribution benefits self and others;
- ◆ Reviewing and Evaluating — by identifying aspects of own performance and reflecting on the experience;
- ◆ Working to reach VIO standards; by fulfilling placement requirements;
- ◆ Skills utilisation in a new context — by applying skills identified to VIO requirements and anticipating how they may be used in other contexts;
- ◆ Interpersonal Skills — through negotiating and interacting with others within the VIO;
- ◆ Interdependence — through being part of the VIO and being relied upon to fulfil required role in pre-agreed tasks;
- ◆ Effective contributing — by giving time to the VIO to achieve their goals.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

The assessment strategy should allow for written and/or oral assessment and performance evidence. The candidate will receive tutor support throughout the Unit whilst generating the evidence required to achieve the National Standard through each of the Outcomes for this Unit. This means that the tutor will issue guidance to candidates to enable progress.

The Unit lends itself to holistic assessment. There are possibilities for a wide range of assessment methods leading to the compilation of a portfolio of evidence which could comprise some or all of the following elements:

- ◆ Candidate notes
- ◆ Assessor observation checklist
- ◆ Diary, log book or blog
- ◆ E-portfolio
- ◆ Video
- ◆ Audio recording by candidate
- ◆ Visual material, eg photographs, poster production etc
- ◆ Self-assessment templates
- ◆ Statement from the volunteering placement provider
- ◆ Recorded tutor led interviews
- ◆ Open ended questions to prompt review, reflection and evaluation
- ◆ A volunteering placement evaluative report.

Performance evidence may be supported by assessor checklists. Feedback from the VIO providing the experience may be taken into account.

The candidate may be given a suitable template to enable the production of the evidence required for identification of skills/qualities/attributes. Additional evidence may derive from a placement provider/mentor checklist or testimonial if appropriate.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit Title:** Volunteering Experience

### 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)*.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will learn how to apply and develop their skills and knowledge in a volunteering capacity. In addition they will review and reflect on their own skills during and after their volunteering experience and on the impact that their experience has had on themselves, the organisation and its clients, or the environment.

Candidates will:

- ◆ analyse their skills and attributes
- ◆ apply and develop their own skills, knowledge or attributes in a volunteering capacity
- ◆ agree and carry out tasks in a placement situation
- ◆ work with VIO staff on placement
- ◆ describe aims and outcomes of their volunteering experience
- ◆ evaluate their volunteering experience
- ◆ evaluate the impact of their placement.

This means that as candidates are doing this Unit they will develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others*.

In addition, candidates may develop aspects of the Core Skills of:

- ◆ *ICT* — where templates and documents are produced electronically or where the placement itself involves tasks using IT.
- ◆ *Numeracy* — where graphical information is included in evaluations or where the placement itself involves tasks using number for example.

Depending on the candidate's placement tasks and the chosen method of assessment, formative and/or summative assessment evidence may be gathered for Communication where Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening skills are practised or demonstrated to meet the Core Skill Performance Criteria.

Working with placement supervisors/mentors or in a group with other volunteers may provide formative and/or summative assessment opportunity for *Working with Others*.

The candidate's pre-agreed placement tasks could contribute to formative evidence for Planning and Organising in *Problem Solving*, if the task is chosen is sufficiently complex to fulfil the *Problem Solving* criteria.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit Title:** Volunteering Experience

### **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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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