



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: The Role and Functions of Public Relations in Organisations (SCQF level 6)

Unit code: FT8W 12

Superclass: BA

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Summary

This Unit aims to address the theory and underpinning knowledge of this specialist area of business communications. It will introduce key terminology and an understanding of the Public Relations (PR) process adopted by commercial and non-commercial organisations in today's competitive markets. PR ethics and Codes of Conduct administered by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) will be examined and legal requirements affecting media relations will also be addressed.

The Unit will be of interest to a wide range of candidates, particularly those directly concerned with marketing, advertising and other consumer behaviour related subjects at SCQF levels 5 and 6.

This is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate in *Advertising and PR*. It is also available as a freestanding Unit.

Outcomes

- 1 Explain the aims and objectives of PR in commercial and non-commercial organisations.
- 2 Explain the roles of PR professional bodies and personnel in PR.
- 3 Investigate PR techniques implemented by commercial and non-commercial organisations.

General information (cont)

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Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ English or Communication at SCQF level 5

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 6: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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

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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

Explain the aims and objectives of PR in commercial and non-commercial organisations.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain the objectives of PR for commercial and non-commercial organisations.
- (b) Describe the differences between PR and advertising.

Outcome 2

Explain the roles of PR professional bodies and personnel in PR.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe clearly the roles of PR Professional bodies.
- (b) Explain the differences between regulation and legal requirements.
- (c) Describe the roles of PR personnel within commercial and non-commercial organisations.

Outcome 3

Investigate PR techniques implemented by commercial and non-commercial organisations.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the range of PR techniques available to commercial and non commercial organisations.
- (b) Analyse the effective use of PR techniques implemented in commercial and non-commercial organisations.
- (c) Present the findings relating to the PR techniques in commercial and non-commercial organisations.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Assessment of this Unit can be carried out holistically.

Outcomes 1 and 2

Written and/or oral recorded evidence carried out under open-book conditions is required..

In Outcome 1 at least one commercial and one non-commercial organisation ideally within the same market area must be presented. Clear aims with at least three PR objectives should be outlined for each organisation. A minimum of three differences should be described.

In Outcome 2 correct reference to the current PR professional bodies is required. At least one example of regulation and one example of law should be identified. One job title and brief description for a commercial and one for a non-commercial organisation should be supplied.

Outcome 3

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to meet Performance Criteria relating to a commercial and a non-commercial organisation. Responses must include objectives of the PR campaigns, stakeholders identified, PR techniques outlined and evaluated with examples relating to the PR campaigns.

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

In this Unit, candidates will develop their knowledge in the current theories and practice applied to PR. The correct definition of PR, its stakeholders (sometimes referred to as publics), communications objectives and media planning will be identified. PR will be compared and evaluated against advertising in order to clarify their differences. The Unit will refer to commercial (for profit) organisations and non-commercial (non/not-for-profit) organisations.

PR ethics and Codes of Conduct administered by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) will be examined. Legal requirements affecting media relations will also be addressed. The structure of PR and employment opportunities will also be referred to in line with current industry practice.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

For both commercial and non-commercial PR activities, access to online press offices (or equivalent) is a valuable source that allows identification and evaluation of various organisations' PR planning and actions. Local, regional and national examples should be referred to. Positive and negative damage limitation situations should be tracked throughout the Unit to look at short and long term PR implementation. Media should include broadcast, non-broadcast and social media networks. PR communications internal to the organisation as well as the more obvious external media activities should be addressed. Candidates should be encouraged to select and research a range of commercial and non-commercial PR activities on line and through websites, press, consumer magazines and other media accessible to them. Direct reference to references/websites such as the CIPR, PRCA and the links to relevant statutes such as The Broadcasting Act, Data Protection Act, Defamation Act (Slander, Libel, Obscenity, Privacy), etc is required.

To promote the range and diversity of examples it is good practice to encourage individuals or groups of candidates to cascade and present their PR activity findings to their peers in the class. Candidates should be encouraged to refer to professional publications such as "PR Week" and 'Campaign' magazine.

By adopting the above learning and teaching approaches and/or through the Outcomes and corresponding Evidence Requirements, the Unit should provide candidates with an opportunity to develop essential skills for life, learning and work:

Employability — through developing practical skills to industry standards and working on time limited tasks.

Sustainability — through using electronic rather than paper resources to present findings.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Outcomes 1 and 2

It is recommended that examples illustrating current industry practice are selected by the candidate although the tutor may provide references for the assessments.

In Outcome 1 examples of at least one reference for a commercial and one reference for a non-commercial organisation is required with supplementary evidence.

In Outcome 2 examples of at least one reference for regulation and one reference for law is required with supplementary evidence.

Evidence can be supplemented by the candidate attaching their organisational references to their written response. This evidence may be an abstract, print out, press clipping, media example etc relating to the candidate's responses. A set of questions relating to Performance Criteria could be set for both Outcomes.

As this is an open-book assessment, the candidate can receive the assessment in advance and may prepare for or complete outwith the class to allow for research. Centres must however be satisfied that the final evidence submitted is the candidate's own work.

Outcome 3

Candidates could deliver a short audio visual presentation to the class. This presentation should address one commercial and one non-commercial organisation preferably within the same market area. Media examples should be demonstrated. As well as the observational checklist it is recommended that presentations are filmed for evidence purposes and as a feedback tool for the candidates after the event. Questions should be encouraged from the audience (class) to promote interactivity and peer evaluation. When administering a group assessment the maximum number of members should be three candidates. To ensure individual contribution and criteria achievement checklists should refer to the individual's contribution to the presentation.

Alternatively Outcome 3 could be presented in a written or word processed report. Discussion and feedback relating to the checklist should take place for each candidate.

Good examples and practice identified by candidates in Outcome 1 may provide the commercial and non commercial examples for Outcome 3.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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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 develop their knowledge in the current theories and practice applied to PR. The correct definition of PR, its stakeholders (sometimes referred to as publics), communications objectives and media planning will be identified. PR will be compared and evaluated against advertising in order to clarify the differences. The Unit will refer to commercial (for profit) organisations and non-commercial (non/not-for-profit) organisations. PR ethics and Codes of Conduct administered by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) will be examined. Legal requirements affecting media relations will also be addressed. The structure of PR and employment opportunities will also be referred to in line with current industry practice.

Candidates will:

- ◆ explain roles and functions in PR
- ◆ differentiate between different concepts
- ◆ describe functions carried out by professional bodies in PR
- ◆ carry out research
- ◆ analyse and discuss findings
- ◆ present findings
- ◆ produce reports

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

In addition, the following Core Skills may be developed through specific learning and teaching techniques for example:

- ◆ *Numeracy* — through use of graphical information in reporting findings
- ◆ *Information and Communication Technology* — through using the internet for research purposes and producing reports using word processing packages
- ◆ *Working with Others* — through working in teams to research and discuss findings

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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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 to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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