



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Computing: IT Support for End Users (SCQF level 6)

Unit code: FX1K 12

Superclass: CB

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Summary

The purpose of this Unit is to provide candidates with an understanding of the function of an IT help desk. Candidates will be introduced to effective communication methods, characteristics of professional behaviour, analysis of user requests and basic troubleshooting methods.

This is an optional Unit within the National Certificate in Computing: Technical Support at SCQF level 6. It is also available as a freestanding Unit. This Unit is suitable for candidates who are interested in a career in IT support or progressing to further study at HN level.

This Unit will prepare learners to progress to vendor certification MCDST (Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician) at HN level.

Outcomes

- 1 Describe an effective IT help desk.
- 2 Analyse, record and assign user requirements.
- 3 Resolve user requirements using recognised troubleshooting methods.
- 4 Communicate with user to confirm user requirements are satisfied.

Recommended entry

No prior knowledge or experience of IT support is necessary. While entry is at the discretion of the centre, good skills in communication, problem solving and Information and Communication Technology will be an advantage.

National Unit specification: general information (cont)

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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

Describe an effective IT help desk.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the functions of an IT help desk.
- (b) Describe effective communication methods and professional behaviour.
- (c) Identify the content and importance of service level agreements.
- (d) Identify methods of documenting user requirements and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Outcome 2

Analyse, record and assign user requirements.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Analyse and document a user's requirements.
- (b) Assign an appropriate priority level and response time to the user's requirements using a service level agreement.
- (c) Assign an appropriate technical level of support.

Outcome 3

Resolve user requirements using recognised troubleshooting methods.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Troubleshoot and diagnose user request.
- (b) Resolve and document possible fault and intended approach.
- (c) Document user requirement solution, resources and time.

Outcome 4

Communicate with user to confirm user requirements are satisfied.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Communicate with user to confirm user requirements are satisfactory.
- (b) Document method of communication and user response.
- (c) Escalation of unfulfilled user requests.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidate can:

- ◆ describe the functions of a help desk
- ◆ describe effective communication methods and professional behaviour including avoiding technical jargon, respecting users' privacy and using appropriate body language
- ◆ describe the purpose, content and importance of a service level agreement including fairness, response times and consistency to all users
- ◆ describe three methods of documenting user requirements including a suitable software application, an electronic database and a manual record. Candidates should explain when to utilise the various types of documentation depending on size of organisation and the advantages and disadvantages of each method

Outcome 2 — Written and/or oral recorded and performance evidence that demonstrates that the candidate can on at least one occasion:

- ◆ gather all necessary information of the user and the user's requirements accurately
- ◆ correctly analyse the user's requirements including symptoms, displayed error messages, how many users are affected by this issue
- ◆ document the user's requirements in an electronic incident report accurately
- ◆ correctly assign an appropriate priority level and response time to the user requirement in accordance to a recognised service level agreement
- ◆ assign an appropriate technical level of support

Outcome 3 — Written and/or oral recorded and performance that demonstrates that the candidate can on at least one occasion:

- ◆ check the existing documentation against similar previous reports to establish solution
- ◆ provide a fault diagnosis with the aid of a common troubleshooting tool
- ◆ document all diagnosis tasks in the electronic incident report, detailing any diagnostic tool utilised and the results of all tests undertaken
- ◆ document possible fault identified and corrective action plan identifying a suitable method of communication to confirm that the user requirements have been resolved
- ◆ document the actual solution, the name of all resources and the time spent resolving the user requirements in the incident report

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 4 — Written and/or oral recorded and performance that demonstrates that the candidate can on at least one occasion:

- ◆ communicate with user using an appropriate method to confirm that the user requirements are now satisfied. the appropriate method would be the preferred method of the user, ie face-to-face, email or telephone
- ◆ document the communication method and the response confirming the user is satisfied and in agreement the incident can be closed
- ◆ describe the escalation process if candidate does not have the skills to resolve the user request. This should include the escalation to correct technical level, the documentation of work performed, documentation of the escalation and communication with user

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 aligned to the following e-Skills UK National Occupational Standards level 3: IT/Technology Service Catalogue and/or Service Level Management, Measurement and Reporting.

Outcome 1

Effective communication methods and professional behaviour would be:

- ◆ appropriate communication techniques could be in person, telephone e-mail or remote consoling. An awareness of appropriate language, tone, user privacy, body language, gestures and sensitivity to user frustration
- ◆ an awareness of the importance of complete documentation and effective recording of user requirements
- ◆ an awareness of unclear, incomplete, ambiguous or contains contradictory information

The functions of an IT help desk could include:

- ◆ acts as the users' single point of contact for reporting various IT issues
- ◆ assigns a unique ID to user requirement for tracking purposes
- ◆ communicates with customers or employees
- ◆ searches for previous similar issues to identify the solution to accelerate resolution
- ◆ guides the user through self help procedure to resolve basic common problems
- ◆ highlight outstanding user requests
- ◆ gathers information to identify and plan maintenance

Identifying content and importance of service level agreements would include:

- ◆ the candidate is required to gain an understanding of the importance and typical content of a service level
- ◆ the candidate should be aware of what a Service level agreement and the importance to users, including fairness and consistency to all users
- ◆ the content of a service level agreement could include services, priorities, target times, responsibilities, guarantees, and warranties, etc

Methods of documenting user requirements would include:

- ◆ candidate should be aware of various software applications suitable to the documenting of user requirement storage, eg a help desk application, an electronic database or a manual record
- ◆ the candidate should be able to identify when to utilise each type of software

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Help desk application in a large organisation with high volume user requirements.

- ◆ Advantages:
 - tracking facility
 - ease of use
 - integrated package
 - ease of querying past requests
 - developed especially for the purpose

- ◆ Disadvantages:
 - often expensive to purchase
 - training involved

Electronic database in medium to large organisation where help desk application is not affordable:

- ◆ Advantages:
 - easy to use
 - ease of querying past requests
 - typically included within the organisation's office suite

- ◆ Disadvantages:
 - has to be developed
 - training required
 - not as efficient as help desk application

Manual recording (only appropriate in a small organisation with few user requirement issues)

- ◆ Advantages:
 - cheap
 - easily available
 - no training required

- ◆ Disadvantages:
 - unstructured
 - difficult to maintain
 - difficult to query past issues

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 2

Analyse and document a user requirement would include:

- ◆ The candidate is required to gather all necessary information of the user and the user request. This should include user detail, location and contact details as well as a record of the issue, location of the issue, the severity of the issue, and a concise description of the issue.
- ◆ The candidate is required to document an electronic incident report and request any incomplete information. Candidates are required to complete an incident report for the problem provided in a given scenario.
- ◆ Performance evidence is required to show that the candidate can assign an appropriate priority level and response time to the user requirement in accordance to a recognised service level agreement.
- ◆ The candidate should have an awareness of High, Medium and Low priority levels. Each priority level would have a specified response time.

Performance evidence that the candidate can assign an appropriate technical level of support.

- ◆ The candidate is required to have knowledge of the levels of technical support, the skills/expertise of each level and types of user request each level is likely to be assigned. They should also be able to decide if the issue has to be assigned.
- ◆ Technical levels are:
 - level 1(L1)
 - level 2 (L2)
 - level 3 (L3)
 - level 4 (L4)
- ◆ The candidate should be aware of the skills of each level and the typical issues each level would be assigned.

Outcome 3

Resolve user requirement using recognised troubleshoot methods would include performance evidence that the candidate can troubleshoot and diagnose user request.

- ◆ The candidate should firstly query the existing documentation for previous solutions to similar previous reports.
- ◆ The candidate is required to provide fault diagnosis with the aid of common tools and third party utilities where appropriate.
- ◆ All diagnosis tasks must be documented in the electronic incident report, detailing any diagnostic tool utilised and the results of all tests undertaken.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Performance evidence is required to show that the candidate can resolve and document possible faults and intended approach.

- ◆ The candidate is required document possible fault identified and corrective action plan should identify and suitable method of communication to confirm that the user requirements have been resolved. Performance evidence is required that the candidate can document user requirement solution, resources and time worked on.
- ◆ The candidate is required to document the actual solution, the name of all resources and the time spent resolving the user requirements.

Outcome 4

Outcome 4 is for the appropriate communication with the user to confirm they are satisfied the request is not satisfied. A suitable format for this outcome could be an email sent to the lecturer asking for permission to close the user request. The help desk application or electronic database should also be updated with details of the communication and user agreement to close the request.

- ◆ Performance evidence that the candidate can communicate with user to confirm user requirements are satisfactory. The candidate is required to communicate with user using an appropriate method to confirm that the user requirements are now satisfied. A brief description on the issue and the cause of the problem along with main tasks required to resolve the issue.
- ◆ Performance evidence that the candidate can document method of communication and user response.
- ◆ The candidate is required to document the communication method and the response confirming the user is satisfied and in agreement the incident can be closed.
- ◆ Performance evidence that the candidate can escalate unfulfilled user requests. The user should be aware of the escalation process if they do not have the skills to resolve the user request. This should include the escalation to correct technical level, the documentation of work perform, documentation of the escalation and communication with user. Before assigning using the appropriate method to escalate the request — this could be the return to level 1 for reassignment or the direct assignment to the appropriate level.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

A practical, hands-on approach to learning should be adopted. The emphasis should be on learning-by-doing. Terminology and underpinning knowledge should be introduced in a practical context.

Throughout this Unit, candidate activities should relate to their personal or vocational interests. For example candidates locate, process and communicate information relating to their academic work, hobbies and pastimes, recreational and entertainment preferences or other topics that can genuinely stimulate their interest.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Outcome 1 is designed to enable candidates to analyse reported problems and provide effective communication with the user. The candidate must be aware of the importance and function of a help desk and service level agreements. A suitable format for this outcome could be a scenario provided in the form of an email or in a telephone call describing a common IT issue. A printed entry sheet from the intended help desk software or electronic database would be suitable for candidates to document information and to help identify omitted information.

Outcome 2 is designed to enable candidates to record a user request and assign the user request the appropriate level of response and technical staff to resolve the issue. The evidence for outcome 1 can be used to record the user request. A help desk application or a developed electronic database would be suitable for the recording of the evidence required for Outcome 2.

Outcome 3 is designed to enable candidates to analyse and troubleshoot a reported problem. The software utilised for Outcome 2 could be updated with details of the work progress and all results from all activities.

Outcome 4 is for the appropriate communication with the user to confirm they are satisfied the request is not satisfied. A suitable format for this outcome would be an email sent to the lecturer asking for permission to close the user request. The help desk application or electronic database should also be updated with details of the communication and user agreement to close the request.

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 social software. 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)*.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will develop the skills needed to operate an IT help desk effectively and efficiently.

Candidates will:

- ◆ communicate with colleagues to establish IT related problem
- ◆ gather all relevant information to analyse problem
- ◆ search for similar previously reported problems to identify solution and accelerate resolution
- ◆ assign the user issue to the appropriate priority level, technical level and response time in accordance to a recognised service level agreement
- ◆ complete an electronic incident report
- ◆ carry out a fault diagnosis, documenting each task and diagnostic tool used in the incident report
- ◆ identify and document possible faults and corrective action plan
- ◆ resolve issue and document solution, resources used and time taken
- ◆ inform user of the issue, cause and tasks required to resolve the issue
- ◆ seek feedback on customer satisfaction on resolution of the IT related problem

This means that as candidates are doing this Unit they will be developing aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication, Information and Communication Technology* and *Problem Solving*.

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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