National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF Level 4)

Unit code: H1N5 10

Superclass:	AY
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Summary

This Unit has been designed is to provide candidates with an understanding of the role of the Administrative Assistant in an office environment and to develop skills required in this role.

Candidates will research routine administrative activities and develop basic skills in office work, reception, travel itinerary planning and mobile technologies.

This Unit is suitable for candidates interested in working in an office environment in a junior capacity, adults returning to education, school-leavers who have not studied Administration previously and candidates wishing to progress to full time courses in Administration at SCQF levels 4 or 5.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the National Progression Award Administrative Activities at SCQF level 4, but can also be studied as a free standing Unit.

Outcomes

1   Describe the role of an Administrative Assistant in an office environment.
2   Assist with routine office practice.
3   Assist with reception activities.
4   Assist with research for travel.

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:

♦   Core Skills
♦   Communication at Access 3 level
♦   An interest in the subject area

General information (cont.)

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 4 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*)

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: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

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 the role of an Administrative Assistant in an office environment.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify the position of the administrative assistant in a typical office hierarchy.
(b) Describe the role of an Administrative Assistant.
(c) Identify activities undertaken by an Administrative Assistant.

Outcome 2

Assist with routine office practice.

Performance Criteria

(a) Apply mail procedures.
(b) Use filing systems.
(c) Photocopy documents.
(d) Identify uses of mobile technologies in the office.

Outcome 3

Assist with reception duties.

Performance Criteria

(a) Assist with the maintenance of a reception area including aspects of health and safety.
(b) Assist with preparation for visitors.
(c) Assist with dealing with visitors.
(d) Follow organisational procedures.

Outcome 4

Assist with research for travel.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify available resources for arranging travel.
(b) Use resources to find out specific travel information.
(c) Present findings of research.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Performance and written and/or oral evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Evidence must be generated under open-book, supervised conditions. Candidates can have access to notes and prescribed procedures. The performance and product elements of the assessment will be on-going.

Outcome 1

Written or oral recorded evidence is required where the candidate demonstrates their knowledge of the position and role of an Administrative Assistant in a typical office environment and the activities they may be requested to undertake. The role will vary according to the organisation but candidates should demonstrate awareness of the requirement to assist administrators in supporting all the other functional areas in organisation. The evidence must identify at least five different activities undertaken by an Administrative Assistant.

Outcome 2

Performance evidence is required to show that the candidate has assisted with mailing, filing and photocopying; Performance evidence must show that the candidate has:

♦ checked and distributed incoming mail correctly
♦ collected, sorted and dispatched outgoing mail correctly
♦ filed a selection of documents correctly either electronically or manually
♦ photocopied three documents correctly including one involving enlargement, one involving back to back

Written and or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the use of mobile technologies in an office environment. This will include examples of texting, emailing and alerts. This could also include emerging technologies.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 3

Performance evidence is required to show that the candidate has assisted in reception including:

♦   maintaining a reception area
♦   observing Health and Safety
♦   participation in assisting with reception duties including:
  —   answering the telephone promptly, identifying the caller and directing a call
  —   making outgoing calls and relaying brief information on behalf of the organisation
  —   welcoming and greeting visitors on one occasion
♦   preparing to deal with visitors including:
  —   creating a list of known visitors
  —   creating name tags/visitor passes for known visitors
  —   ensuring the visitor book is ready and up to date
  —   meeting and greeting visitors
  —   directing visitors to correct locations
♦   following organisational procedures for receiving a visitor

Outcome 4

Written or oral recorded evidence is required where the candidate demonstrates his or her ability to research travel information. This will include:

♦   ascertaining what information is needed
♦   identifying the source of the information
♦   organising the information, ie travel details which will include mode of travel, company name, arrival and departure times, check-in information and any travel requirements.
♦   providing the information clearly within agreed time limits, eg as an itinerary

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 may be assessed holistically.

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

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

Administrative Activities is aligned to CfA — Business Skills @ Work and provides links to the National Occupational Standards — PPL1FOH1 and PPL1FOH2.

PPL1FOH1 Process information for reception function

Deal with incoming and outgoing telephone calls

♦   P1 answer the telephone promptly, using your organisation's style
♦   P2 identify the caller and what they need
♦   P3 answer queries accurately according to your own level of responsibility
♦   P4 make outgoing calls, for self or on behalf of others, using your organisation's style and procedures
♦   P5 give relevant information promptly and accurately
♦   P6 refer any queries that are beyond your level of responsibility to the appropriate member of staff

Give people the information they need

♦   P7 find out what information is needed
♦   P8 identify the right source for the information
♦   P9 get the information and organise it clearly and logically
♦   P10 give the information to the person who has asked for it within agreed time limits
♦   P11 avoid giving out confidential information
♦   P12 ask for help from an appropriate member of staff when you cannot find the information
♦   P13 politely explain to the person asking for the information if you have had problems finding it

PPL1FOH2 Assist in handling mail

Incoming Mail

♦   P1 check incoming mail or packages
♦   P2 sort incoming mail or packages and dispose of unwanted 'junk' mail
♦   P3 identify and/or report suspicious or damaged items
♦   P4 distribute incoming mail or packages
♦   P5 refer any problems to the appropriate colleague

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

Outgoing mail

♦ P6 collect and sort outgoing mail or packages
♦ P7 dispatch outgoing mail or packages on time
♦ P8 refer any problems to the appropriate colleague

This Unit forms part of the National Progression Award Administrative Activities and Technologies (SCQF level 4) but can also be taken as a free standing Unit. The broad aim of this Unit is to provide candidates with an overview and understanding of the role of the Administrative Assistant and the skills required in order to undertake this role; and the use of systems and technology in an office environment.

The practical aspect of assisting in a reception area will develop the candidates organisational and communication skills as they may have to consider dealing with both internal and external customers to the organisation. Health and safety awareness will also be enhanced in conjunction with the importance of adherence to organisational procedures.

Researching skills will be developed as searching various resources should be encouraged for investigative purposes. Awareness of various modes of transportation and consideration of costs should be taken into cognisance.

Competence in the use of effective communication systems and mobile technologies are intended to ensure the candidate is aware of the dynamics of the office environment.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

Candidates should be introduced to the theoretical aspect of the role of the Administrative Assistant. Skills and attributes of this role should be explained and the duties and tasks of the Administrative Assistant should be explored and possibly compared with other roles in an organisation. Activities to be investigated should include responding to correspondence, handling mail, filing, photocopying, reception duties, handling telephone calls, arranging travel, use of the internet, use of mobile technologies, The performance evidence could be generated through role play in a simulated office environment.

This could be complemented by setting practical exercises for candidates to ensure that they can carry out the practical elements to the required standard.

Systems and procedures may be set up in advance and availability of various resources to assist with research, eg travel information could be made available to the candidate.

Careful consideration should be taken with specified tasks to ensure there are no barriers to achievement.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

Essential Skills

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

Employability — through development of practical skills by working on industry specific tasks and working as part of a team; employer and customer awareness though encouragement of customer satisfaction and building relationships and self-management by undertaking specific tasks to a given time period.

Enterprise — through career development and by providing an understanding of the role of the Administrative Assistant. Through self-awareness and improvement this Unit provides the opportunity of learning by experience.

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Outcome 1

The recommended method of assessment for Outcome 1 is through restricted response questions on the position of the Administrative Assistant in an organisational structure, role of the Administrative Assistant and the activities an Administrative Assistant is likely to be involved in. This could be based on a theoretical, simulated or real office environment.

Outcome 2

♦   Observation checklist and assessor's notes following the observation of the candidate in a role play using mailing procedures, filing and photocopying.
♦   Written explanation of the use of mobile technologies in an office environment

Outcome 3

Observation Checklist and Assessor's notes following the observation of the candidate in a role play scenario within a reception area.

Outcome 4

This Outcome could be evidenced through the candidate's response to a practical exercise or assignment. Evidence of research using various resources for a specific travel related task.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 may be assessed holistically. This could take the form of a case study, eg requesting the candidate to research travel for visiting clients. The candidate could be tasked to photocopy information for travel, then requested to simulate mailing the information to the client. The additional copies should then be filed following organisational procedures. In order to receive the visiting clients the candidate could prepare the reception area then prepare for dealing with external visiting clients. They could write a small summary on how they could use mobile and/or emerging technologies to contact the clients if changes were to be made to the agreed arrangements.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Administrative Activities (SCQF level 4)

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 about the role of the administrative Assistant and carry out a selection of tasks in an office environment.

Candidates will:

♦   investigate the role of the Administrative Assistant
♦   explain the role of mobile technologies
♦   assist with mailing, filing, and photocopying
♦   carry out reception duties
♦   research travel arrangements

This means that as candidates are doing this Unit they will be developing aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Working with Others.*

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