



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Consumer Studies (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: H1SD 11

Superclass: BA

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Summary

This Unit will provide candidates with knowledge and understanding of consumer issues and provide them with the skills to efficiently and effectively support consumers. On completion of this Unit candidates will be able to accurately outline the legislation, regulations and codes of practice that impact on the provision of goods and/or services to consumers, identify sources of consumer support, and apply problem solving techniques to resolve consumer problems.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the National Certificate in Retailing at SCQF level 5 but can also be delivered as a free-standing Unit.

Outcomes

- 1 Identify consumer organisations that exist to uphold and protect consumers' rights.
- 2 Identify the regulatory context and codes of practice which apply to the provision of goods and services to consumers.
- 3 Identify common problems consumer organisations may deal with and possible solutions.

Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates had some previous knowledge and experience of providing and/or obtaining goods and services and were able to demonstrate effective communication and analysis skills.

This could be evidenced by possession of: Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving, PSE or Customer Service, qualification at SCQF level 4; or equivalent or relevant work experience.

General information (cont)

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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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill	None
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Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5
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There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

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

Identify consumer organisations that exist to uphold and protect consumers' rights.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Define consumer and consumer rights.
- (b) Identify sources of consumer support and advice.
- (c) Describe the functions of a selection of national consumer organisations.

Outcome 2

Identify the regulatory context and codes of practice which apply to the provision of goods and services to consumers.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Outline legislation for the provision of goods and services.
- (b) Identify codes of practice governing the provision of goods and services.
- (c) Identify the regulatory context for the provision of goods and services.

Outcome 3

Identify common problems consumer organisations may deal with and possible solutions.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify issues and/or events that might give rise to problems for consumers of goods and services.
- (b) Explain the importance of consumer problem resolution.
- (c) Identify possible solutions to consumers' problems.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Consumer Studies (SCQF level 5)

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Written and/or recorded oral record is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Evidence for all Outcomes will be generated under open-book conditions.

For Outcomes 1 and 2 the candidate must provide:

- ◆ a satisfactory definition of 'consumer' and 'consumer rights'
- ◆ identification of three sources of support and/or advice to consumers
- ◆ a description of the functions of two national consumer organisations
- ◆ an accurate outline of the wide range of legislation that impacts on the provision of goods and/or services with a focus on consumer related law
- ◆ identification of three codes of practice that relate to the provision of goods and services to consumers
- ◆ identification of two regulations that relate to the provision of goods and/or services to consumers

For Outcome 3 the candidate must provide evidence from two different scenarios which must include:

- ◆ an outline of an issue that might give rise to consumer problems or complaints
- ◆ an explanation of the importance of consumer problem resolution to successful operation of an organisation
- ◆ a suggested solution which makes reference to appropriate legislation and/or, regulations and/or codes of practice

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 partially aligned to the following National Occupational Standards Activities in Retail is covered in the standards.

- SSR.C209 Help Retail Customers sort out Complaints
- SSR.D004 Resolve customer Complaints: complaints within the Retail Business
- SSR.B209 Help retail customers who need to return goods
- SSR.D001 Develop Customer Service Policies and Standards for your Retail Business

The context for this Unit is the vast and rapidly expanding business, retail and service sector environment. Learning and teaching activities should take account of the global nature of the modern business world. Studies should include a wide range of goods and/or service providers, including sole-traders, multi-national companies, voluntary organisations, publicly funded bodies and media-based retailers and businesses.

Outcome 1

Definition of what being a consumer is, entails includes the types of goods and/or services that might be used and influences on choice, including; needs, circumstances and/or location.

Exploration of the development of the local and national organisations associated with the modern-day consumer movement can includes aims and functions of:

- a) The Consumer Association
- b) Other consumer associations
- c) The Office of Fair Trading
- d) National Federation of Consumer Groups
- e) Consumer Advice Centres
- f) The British Standards Institute
- g) Consumer protection/trading standards departments
- h) Citizens' Advice Bureau

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 2

The regulatory context includes regulations, codes of practice and legislation relating to the provision of goods and/or services.

Identification of the legislation should include both civil and criminal law as it applies to consumer rights and/or discriminatory practice in business, retail and/or service sectors.

In Scotland; 'Equal opportunities means the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions'.

Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998. Businesses and organisations, when providing goods and/or services to people, cannot discriminate on the grounds of disability, race, gender, religion or belief or sexual orientation. This applies whether services are provided face-to-face, by telephone or online, and whether the services must be paid for or are provided free of charge.

Consumer Rights include:

- ◆ statutory rights; including exchanges, return to manufacturer, refunds and credit notes
- ◆ guarantees, provisions and exclusions
- ◆ pursuing legal redress

In this context legislation that impacts on provision of goods and services can include:

- ◆ Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005
- ◆ Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Part III
- ◆ Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Race Relations Act 1976
- ◆ Knives Act 1997
- ◆ Sale Of Goods (Amendment) Act 1995
- ◆ Food Safety Act 1990
- ◆ Weights and Measures Act 1985
- ◆ Consumer Protection Act 1987
- ◆ Prices Act 1974 And 1975

Regulations/Codes of practice could include EU regulations impacting on consumer include, for example, Consumer protection From Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, Package Travel Regulations 1992.

There are significant numbers of regulatory bodies and specific trade and/or industry codes of practice which impact upon the provision of goods and services to consumers. For example, The Advertising Standard Authority in regulates advertising in general, however in TV and radio, the Independent Broadcasting Authority standards additionally regulate their advertising.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 3

Performance evidence is required from two different customer service scenarios in which the candidate demonstrates the successful application of problem solving strategies.

Candidates could explore business growth and decline relative to the customer relations profile, highlighting the importance of efficient resolution of consumer problems, the benefits of effective customer care and the importance of first impressions.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

A candidate centred approach should be taken throughout teaching and learning, however additional tutor organised educational visits or practitioner presentations would be valuable.

Individual and/or group research activities could include review of specialist consumer magazines and journals, participation in internet searches or media analysis; and additionally candidates might conduct a peer survey. The peer survey could, for example, be used to gather evidence of consumer problems or to identify the types of goods and/or services obtained via the internet, mail-order, TV and/or the more traditional providers.

Internet research might be particularly useful in relation to:

- ◆ Discrimination Law and the Provision of Goods and Services
- ◆ Legal Rights and Consumer Affairs
- ◆ Providers of Consumer Support — Citizens' Advice Bureau, Trading Standards
- ◆ British Standards/Codes of Conduct

Candidates may also find it useful to:

- ◆ collect and collate leaflets, posters, adverts and/or website printouts, that exemplify the range and roles of local and national consumer support and/or advice agencies
- ◆ list the breadth of legislation that impacts on the provision of goods and/or services, including civil/criminal law, discrimination law and specific consumer related law
- ◆ produce a summary of regulations and codes of practice that relate to the provision of goods and services to consumers
- ◆ explain the importance of consumer problem resolution to successful operation and maintenance of the business image
- ◆ list issues that might give rise to consumer problems and/or customer complaints

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Essential Skills

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 the following essential skills for life, learning and work:

Enterprise — the entire Unit provides opportunities for experiencing the enterprise environment, entrepreneurial activities, and career development

Employability — through developing knowledge and skills in self-management, customer and employer awareness

Citizenship — through developing and applying knowledge of legislation designed to protect the consumer

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

A holistic approach, covering all Outcomes, is recommended where evidence, of knowledge gained and skills developed, is collected and collated from a wide range of learning and teaching activities.

Participation in a series of individual and/or group research activities, investigations and presentations; and compiling a folio of evidence that demonstrates knowledge and understanding in relation to:

- ♦ the various influences that impact on consumers; and the range and roles of the various local and national agencies operating within the modern day consumer movement which provide support and/or advice to consumers
- ♦ the scope and impact of legislation, regulations and codes of practice that relate to the provision of goods and/or services to consumers
- ♦ the importance of consumer problem resolution, including the efficient identification of the issues and the effective application of problem solving to successful operation and maintenance of the business image.

Candidates could be provided with a template for portfolio production including either brief headings or questions corresponding to the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Within the folio, candidate sourced and/or produced, information should be attached to the relevant Outcomes and/or Performance Criteria, then indexed and referenced accurately. Whilst some collectively sourced materials may be inserted into relevant sections, the teacher/lecturer should ensure that the final folio of collated information submitted by the candidate for assessment is their own work.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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In addition, for **Outcome 3**, the candidate's response to given case studies, including identification then resolution of consumer problems, would enable them to demonstrate problem solving strategies and techniques. Candidate's performance evidence could be assessed from:

- ◆ a role play scenario (operation of Customer Service desk/phone-line)
- ◆ a piece of text based evidence (eg an advice column response, a letter/e-mail reply from a consumer support agency)
- ◆ a presentation to peers (poster/leaflet or multi-media).

For all Outcomes an assessor checklist could be used to confirm that all elements have been correctly identified, that associated roles and/or impact have been accurately outlined; and that the application of skills demonstrated was both appropriate and effective.

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)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will develop knowledge of consumer issues in retailing

Candidates will:

- ◆ identify and explain sources of consumer support and advice
- ◆ outline legislation relating the provision of goods and services
- ◆ identify solutions to problems to resolve consumers' problems

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

This Unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5.

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
02	Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 embedded.	09/10/2012

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