

National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

NUMBER D01B 11

COURSE

SUMMARY

This core skills unit seeks to develop the ability to respond to and produce written and oral communication which deal with topics and vocabulary which the candidate may reasonably be expected to encounter through a general awareness of current issues and/or appropriate vocational context(s). This unit is designed to develop communication skills at a level which is the minimum required for intermediate posts in business, administration and technician occupations.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Respond to accessible written communication.
- 2 Produce well-structured written communication.
- 3 Produce and respond to oral communication.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained Communication (Intermediate 1).

CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit at Intermediate 2.

Administrative Information

Superclass: KB

Publication date: December 1998

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 1999

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost is £2.50. (minimum charge £5.00)

CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of core skills is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

The attainment of this unit will lead to the automatic award of:

- Communication at Intermediate 2.

National unit specification: statement of standards

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Note on range for the unit

The outcomes should be demonstrated in relation to material which the candidate may reasonably be expected to encounter through a general awareness of current issues and/or appropriate vocational context(s).

OUTCOME 1

Respond to accessible written communication.

Performance Criteria

- a) Identify the purpose of a communication and justify in terms of the main conventions used.
- b) Identify significant information, ideas and supporting details and provide a basic explanation of their relationships.
- c) Draw inferences from the communication about the writer's point of view and justify with reference to the text.
- d) Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication in meeting its purpose.

Evidence Requirements

Written and/or spoken evidence that on one occasion the candidate has understood, analysed and evaluated an appropriate non-fiction text and has achieved all the performance criteria. All the performance criteria *must* be met within one task.

Accessible written communication

Non-fiction texts must be used. Texts will be accessible and deal with content which the candidate may have encountered through personal experience, an area of study or the work setting. The communication will combine factual content with analysis or present a sustained point of view or central argument. The text may sometimes feature unfamiliar, abstract ideas and some complexity in tone. Complex sentences and some complex/specialist vocabulary will be used and paragraph structures will allow for exemplification and analysis.

OUTCOME 2

Produce well-structured written communication.

Performance Criteria

- a) The techniques are appropriate to the writer's purpose and audience and are used consistently and effectively.
- b) All essential ideas/information contributing to the main purpose of the communication are expressed accurately and coherently.
- c) Structure takes account of purpose and audience and clearly delineates the points it presents.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

- d) Spelling, punctuation and syntax are consistently accurate; sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary are varied to suit purpose and audience.

Evidence Requirements

One piece of written evidence or a portfolio of thematically linked pieces which show that the candidate has achieved all the performance criteria. The piece, or pieces taken together, should amount to no fewer than 500 words. Where a portfolio of evidence is used, it should consist of one main piece of well-structured written communication. Further linked pieces of writing should be included to show the development of the main piece.

Well structured written communication

The candidate will produce well structured written communication which *either* presents and analyses information with the selection and highlighting of the most significant *or* develops opinions and/or ideas with supporting evidence. The communication will be organised into a logical structure and layout. Word choice and any use of graphics or pictures will be appropriate to purpose, context and target audience. Appropriate techniques and structures will be used accurately with some use of complex/specialist vocabulary. Sentences will show accurate handling of clauses and linkages between sentences will be clear. Paragraphing will reflect a developing line of thought. Although a few errors may be present, these will not be significant in any way.

OUTCOME 3

Produce and respond to oral communication.

Performance Criteria

- a) Use of vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures is appropriate to purpose and audience.
- b) The communication conveys all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently.
- c) Skill in sequencing and linking information, opinions and/or ideas is shown.
- d) Delivery takes account of situation and audience.
- e) Responses take account of the contributions of other(s).

Evidence Requirements

All the performance criteria must be met in one spoken interaction (discussion or presentation) involving significant contributions and interaction with one or more people. A brief note of context and source will accompany the evidence, which could take the form of a checklist or recording. An individual presentation should last for a minimum of four minutes with additional time for questions.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

In a spoken interaction at this level

The candidate will convey all essential information, opinions or ideas with sequencing and linking appropriate to purpose and situation. The use of vocabulary, register and structure will meet a clear purpose and be varied as necessary. Some specialist vocabulary may be included where appropriate to purpose and audience. Delivery will be audible with pace, tone and modulation adjusted to the needs of the group or audience. Appropriate use will be made of non-verbal conventions. The candidate will respond to points of view and/or questions from others.

National unit specification: support notes

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

The content and context for this core skills unit should be appropriate to the personal and/or vocational needs of the candidate.

Core skills units are stated at five levels of attainment, with activities becoming progressively more demanding in breadth and depth, and in the extent of individual autonomy required. The appendix to this unit shows the relationship between the levels in Communication.

The programme in Communication should develop:

- the skills and concepts required for reading accessible texts
- the skills and concepts required for reading and researching topics and texts
- the skills and concepts required for informational and expressive writing
- the skills and concepts required for writing notes, plans and evaluations
- the skills and concepts required for individual talk, discussion and listening.

The programme in Communication should provide opportunities to:

- use language for a variety of purposes with a balance between productive and receptive modes
- use language in a range of settings - personal, social and vocational
- read a variety of texts which offer a range of reading demands
- use a range of written forms including graphical and pictorial
- use a range of forms of oral communication with a balance between productive and receptive modes.

Outcome 1

Non-fiction texts must be used. Candidates' reading should include a variety of texts and graphical and pictorial representations which offer a range of reading demands, e.g. books; newspapers and magazines; pamphlets; notices; advertisements; instructions; graphs; diagrams; tables; charts; and reports. The text may be related to the candidate's personal interests or to an area of study or the work setting. The text should convey several sets of information/aspects of content.

Texts can include newspaper/journal feature articles; brochures advertising services or facilities (e.g. financial, health, leisure); reports or articles relating to a work setting; extracts from longer works of non-fiction; letters. Texts may also include images, e.g. diagrams, maps, charts, tables, sketches or photographs.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

The *purpose* of the communication can be to present and analyse information and/or develop a point of view. The communication may have more than one purpose, e.g. to inform or report; to discuss; to persuade; to express feelings or reactions; to share an experience; to entertain; to evaluate.

Conventions: candidates should not only identify purpose by referring to the main content, but also to likely audience and these aspects of the form which make clear what type of text it is. In practice, candidates may reasonably be expected to mention aspects of layout, including any graphic material, key phrases that help to identify the purpose and words that convey an appropriate formality.

In *evaluating* the text, the candidate should analyse its strengths and weaknesses and comment on the effectiveness of the communication in meeting its purpose. At this level, reference to the text should not only focus on content but should involve comment on tone, use of vocabulary and register.

Outcome 2

Candidates should use language for a variety of purposes appropriate to their individual needs, e.g. conveying and analysing information; exploring feelings; arguing and persuading; providing support; collating information; organising thoughts; reviewing records. In achieving the purpose of the communication, information will be presented and analysed, with selection and highlighting of the most significant, and opinions and/or ideas will be developed and supported by evidence.

Written communication which the candidate produces should be related to personal interests or to an area of study or the work setting, e.g. reports based on investigations; argumentative essays with clearly defined purpose and audience; personal/reflective or persuasive writing for a specific purpose and audience; substantial letters to newspapers or journals. Texts may also include images, e.g. diagrams, maps, charts, tables, sketches or photographs may be used in support of the written text. The images may be produced by the candidate or selected from a bank of images.

Candidates should choose an appropriate *structure* for written work. The structure chosen and the language techniques used should be appropriate to purpose, context and intended readership. For example, where appropriate, structural sub-divisions such as introduction, background information, presentation and analysis of findings, conclusions or recommendations, should be used.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

It is anticipated that a word length of no fewer than 500 words would be required to demonstrate competence at this level. Where a portfolio of evidence is being used for assessment requirements (e.g. memorandum, business letter and informal report) the pieces should be linked and cover an issue related to personal interest, an area of study or the work setting. The portfolio should consist of one main piece of well-structured written communication. Further linked pieces of writing should be included to show the development of the main piece. The pieces taken together should amount to no fewer than 500 words.

Outcome 3

Candidates should use language for a variety of purposes appropriate to their individual needs, e.g. conveying and analysing information; exploring feelings; arguing and persuading; reviewing experiences, developing an argument containing several sets of information; giving a demonstration; exploring an issue of vocational or personal interest.

In their spoken interaction, candidates may, for example:

- give a talk supported, where appropriate, by images, e.g. illustrations, handouts, audio/visual aids, and involving significant interaction with the audience
- contribute to a group discussion with a clear purpose on topics relevant to the candidates' studies and/or vocational interests (e.g. to explore and form a view on a topic; to contribute to group consensus); the candidate's contribution to the discussion should be significant.

Topics might include, for example, findings from a project or a piece of research which the candidate has been working on, or a tutorial topic which is explored in discussion. The topics being addressed will have some complex features and the discussion/presentation should involve analysis of the topic or aspects of the topic.

In an individual talk the purpose and an overview should be given in the introduction. The information should be presented in a logical sequence with clear linkage of ideas. The conclusion should summarise the main points of the talk. At this level, an individual presentation should last for a minimum of four minutes with additional time for questions.

It is likely that effective group discussion would involve four or more people but an interview or an oral briefing conducted on a one to one basis could be used to demonstrate the standard of oral communication skills which covers the performance criteria.

In *taking account of the contributions of others* candidates should listen and respond to points of view, answer questions, ask questions to clarify or explore in greater depth, summarise or expand a contribution as appropriate. Candidates should respond to questions and comments.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

Delivery should be clear and audible and supported by varied tone and pace to take account of situation and audience. Appropriate use should be made of posture, eye contact and gesture.

In creating a checklist for Outcome 3, teacher/lecturers should find the detail provided under *Evidence Requirements* helpful.

GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

The learning and teaching approaches should encourage candidates to identify the evidence of their attainment and to transfer the skills acquired to other contexts.

Programmes of work in Communication should be designed to engage candidates in the varied and purposeful use of interrelated skills of language through a range of tasks. These tasks may reflect the candidates' vocational interest or may be of more general interest. It is recommended that these tasks should be negotiated and planned in such a way that the evidence required for assessment is generated in the course of ongoing work rather than as a discrete exercise.

Learning and teaching in Communication should be active and candidate-centred. Candidates should have the opportunity to plan and make decisions for themselves, to show initiative and independence and to work co-operatively in groups. Activities should provide opportunities to use language in real situations for real purposes and may be part of projects or practical exercises set within the Communication programme or drawn from activities in other vocational and social contexts.

Opportunities for rewriting, reviewing, revising and evaluating by the candidate, by peers and by the teacher/lecturer should be seen as an essential feature of all formative activities. The candidates should be involved in activities which stretch their capabilities.

The use of dictionaries should be encouraged at all stages. Word processors, including those which can make use of spelling check type software, may be used by candidates.

In oral communication, recordings of candidate performance at this level would enable others to appreciate the standard required. Recorded evidence of candidate performance would also assist internal and external verification.

Where the Communication unit is being combined with another unit to create an enhanced learning and teaching programme, care must be taken to ensure that all aspects of each unit are covered and adequate time must be allowed for the coverage of both units. Such a programme would create opportunities to consolidate the skills gained in this unit.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Intermediate 2)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

The statement of satisfactory performance for each outcome indicates the minimum required for the purpose of summative assessment. However, the number of activities undertaken by the candidate in the course of the unit should not be limited to those specified for assessment purposes. In awarding the candidate Communication at Intermediate 2 the teacher/lecturer must be confident that the candidate will be able to demonstrate these skills in any context and set of circumstances.

Teachers/lecturers must remember to distinguish between their differing roles in formative and summative assessment. In the former, as much help and support as is required by the candidate may legitimately be given by the teacher/lecturer. *Tasks which are used to provide evidence for summative assessment must be completed by the candidate unaided.* It would, however, be acceptable for the teacher/lecturer to draw the candidate's attention to any general area of error in relation to particular performance criteria or redirect him or her to the task in hand.

Where the candidate is responding orally in Outcome 1, detailed evidence (transcript, recording) must be retained for verification purposes. In Outcome 3, a brief note of context and source, whether for an individual presentation or group discussion, should accompany the evidence, which could take the form of a checklist or recording.

Evidence of attainment should be gathered, wherever possible, from integrated activities, whether this unit is being studied as a stand alone unit or is being used in combination with others.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements* (SQA, 1998).

Communication: progression chart

Skill	Access 2	Access 3	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2	Higher
Reading	Respond to very simple written communication	Respond to simple written communication	Respond to simple but detailed written communication	Respond to accessible written communication	Respond to complex written communication
Writing	Produce very simple written communication	Produce simple written communication	Produce simple but detailed written communication	Produce well-structured written communication	Produce well-structured written communication on a complex topic
Talking and listening	Produce and respond to very simple oral communication	Produce and respond to simple oral communication	Produce and respond to simple but detailed oral communication	Produce and respond to oral communication	Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic