Core Skills Framework:
an introduction

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Introduction

Core Skills enable people to put their knowledge and understanding into action flexibly, adapting them to new situations. Core Skills apply to a wide range of contexts in education and training, in life, and in work. They underpin and promote the development of learning and study skills, and provide a foundation for lifelong learning and personal development.

The importance of Core Skills is now widely recognised in employment and education. Lifelong learning which builds on people's Core Skills is essential if individuals are to meet their personal needs and the needs of society. In the workplace, employees at every level are increasingly expected to take responsibility for the quality of the products and services they produce or provide. Individuals who can analyse and solve problems, communicate well, use information technology, and work with others effectively, are well-equipped to assume the active, flexible and responsible roles which modern workplaces need.

A wide variety of skills and qualities are developed and used in education and training, in work and in life. Some of these are 'core' to personal development and performance.

First, there are skills for **tackling issues and problems**. These skills include being able to:

♦   think critically

♦   analyse situations and suggest courses of action

♦   plan and organise work and carry it through to completion

♦   reflect on what has been done and to draw conclusions for the future

Second, there are skills that are vital in enabling individuals to function effectively. **Communication**, both orally and in writing, is essential for clarifying your own thoughts, for relating to others, and for learning and working. The **numerical skills** involved in processing, interpreting and communicating information can help you to understand, predict and solve many types of problem. Skills in **using information technology** are increasingly useful for obtaining and analysing information, for organising your ideas, and for communicating and working with others. And being able to **work with others** means having skills that help you to co-operate with others in learning and working situations to identify and achieve your shared goals.

The Core Skills

Each Core Skill, and its components, can be assessed at each of five levels (Access 2, Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher — SCQF levels 2 – 6). This is a brief description of each component and the range activities that its assessment will involve at the different levels.

Communication

Communication skills underpin almost all personal, social, learning and working activity. They are essential in clarifying your thoughts, in interacting and conversing effectively with others, in expressing thoughts and in conveying information, feelings and opinions.

Oral Communication

This component involves the ability to produce and respond to oral communication for a range of purposes and audiences. Essentially, it means being able to take part in discussions and make presentations, interacting with your audience as appropriate. Attainment levels range from:

♦ conveying basic information and opinions through short, informal communications on familiar topics

to:

♦ presenting and analysing complex information and issues through more sustained discussions or presentations on complex topics

Written Communication

This component involves the ability to produce and respond to written communication for a range of purposes and audiences. Attainment levels range from:

♦ dealing with brief communications expressing a few basic ideas or pieces of information about familiar topics

to:

♦ dealing with communications which analyse and explore complex information and issues

Numeracy

To cope with the demands of everyday life, including work and study, people need to be comfortable with numbers and with graphs, symbols, diagrams and calculators. The skills needed for this are essentially those of interpreting, processing and communicating quantifiable and spatial information.

Using Graphical Information

This component involves the ability to use a range of graphical skills to interpret and communicate quantifiable information. Attainment levels range from:

♦ working in familiar contexts with simple specified tables and graphs

to:

♦ working in more abstract contexts and with more complex graphical information which may require some analysis, and where decisions have to be made on effective ways to communicate the information

Using Number

This component involves the ability to apply a range of numerical and other relevant mathematical and statistical skills. Attainment levels range from:

♦ working confidently with basic numbers in everyday contexts

to:

♦ working confidently with more complex numerical concepts and techniques in more abstract contexts

Information Technology

Information Technology is concerned with the electronic collection, organisation, analysis, presentation and communication of information. It encompasses all media types and formats as well as all relevant tools. The Core Skill focuses on the ability to use information technology to process information in a variety of ways which will be useful in work and in the home. It is not about developing IT specialists who will act as first-line support for others or install specialist systems.

Using Information Technology

This component involves the ability to use an IT system to support a range of information-processing activities. Attainment levels range from:

♦ accessing the basic facilities of a computer system to perform simple processing of familiar data and to select information from a local database

to:

♦ making effective, responsible and secure use of a computer system, using software in a context requiring some analysis and design and retrieving information from a range of sources

Problem Solving

The three components of this skill are stages in the process of tackling issues and problems in personal, social, vocational and occupational contexts. They are often used sequentially, and repeatedly, in a single context. Each skill can also be a major focus of activity on its own.

Critical Thinking

This component involves using analysis and reasoning to make decisions and to create or suggest ideas, courses of action and strategies. Attainment levels range from:

♦ working in situations which involve a few, easily-identified factors set in familiar contexts

to:

♦ working in more complex situations which require a greater degree of analysis before approaches can be devised

Planning and Organising

This component involves the ability to plan a task, taking account of available resources, and to manage the task to completion. Attainment levels range from:

♦ creating plans involving a small number of steps and using familiar resources

to:

♦ efficient management of a more complex plan, which may include a review of strategy and a degree of research in identifying the resources to be used

Reviewing and Evaluating

This component involves the ability to reflect on and review the process of tackling issues and problems, to evaluate the Outcomes, and to identify where alternative strategies might have been used. Attainment levels range from:

♦ identifying some strengths and weaknesses in a strategy

to:

♦ identifying and gathering evaluation evidence, evaluating strategies, and making appropriate recommendations

Working with Others

The inclusion of Working with Others as a Core Skill emphasises its importance in co-operative learning and working situations.

Working with Others

This component involves the ability to work with others to plan, agree and take responsibility for tasks, to support co-operative working in appropriate ways, and to review the effectiveness of one's own contribution. Attainment levels range from:

♦ taking allocated responsibility for tasks, seeking or providing information from/to others as required and reviewing one's own contribution

to:

♦ analysing tasks and negotiating goals, roles and responsibilities, anticipating and responding to needs of others and evaluating the effectiveness of one's own contribution

Core Skills certification

Since 1999, candidates for a range of SQA qualifications have been able to show what they have achieved in Core Skills. Virtually all Standard Grade candidates should now get a Core Skills profile which will be reviewed each time they achieve a new SQA qualification. There is no need for candidates to achieve all Core Skills, or to complete a Group Award. Their profile will report their Core Skills achievements by component — so Core Skills certification is available to those who do not complete a whole Core Skill. With increasing emphasis being placed on Core Skills in education (including higher education), training and employment, it is important that candidates are given the opportunity to be credited for what they can do.

Candidates can achieve Core Skills through:

♦ any Unit or Course which has been audited against the Core Skills framework and validated as fully covering one or more Core Skills component
♦ named Core Skills Units

In the former case, certification will be automatic. Neither the centre nor the candidate will need to enter for the Core Skills component — the entry on the Core Skills profile will be generated automatically by SQA when the candidate achieves the relevant Unit or Course.

Named Core Skills Units are available for use by schools, colleges, higher education institutions, and training providers, and in the workplace.

All candidates undertaking a Scottish Group Award will have to achieve specified levels of attainment in Core Skills.

Purpose of this document

The remainder of this document provides detailed technical specifications for each Core Skill for use by those designing and auditing Units, Courses, assessment programmes and Group Awards, and by staff of the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (READING) ACCESS 2

General skill

Read and understand very simple written communication.

Specific skills

♦ identify the purpose of a brief written communication

♦ identify a piece of information in the written communication

Further information on the general skill

Reading material should be very familiar to candidates and routine to their situation. Texts with a practical purpose are most suitable — these are likely to include images as well as words. Vocabulary should be familiar to candidates. The communication will be very brief — using a few simple sentences — and should express its content in a direct, uncomplicated way. The purpose of the communication should be clearly embodied in conventions (eg layout, language, use of pictures or other supportive material) typical of this particular form.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ read a brief written communication (text) which conveys one or two items of information — the text must be non-fiction

♦ identify the purpose of that text, showing awareness of the context within which the information is used, eg a warning, an instruction, an invitation

♦ identify a specific piece of information from the text

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ identifying a warning notice and extracting basic information

♦ identifying from a range of given options the purpose of a basic leaflet or advertisement and selecting simple information

♦ identifying from a range of given options the purpose of instructions and extracting the main idea(s)

General skill

Read and understand simple written communication.

Specific skills

♦   identify the significant ideas or main points in the written communication

♦   make a basic evaluation of the communication supported by a single piece of evidence

Further information on the general skill

Reading material should be familiar to candidates and routine to their situation. Texts with a practical purpose are most suitable — these may include images as well as words. Vocabulary should be familiar to candidates. The communication will be brief, the key points should be explicit and it should express its content in a direct, uncomplicated way. The purpose of the communication should be clearly embodied in conventions typical of this particular form, eg layout, use of graphics or other supportive material, vocabulary, level of formality.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦   read a brief written communication (text) which conveys several items of information — the text must be non-fiction

♦   extract the most important ideas/key points of information from that text

♦   say whether the text achieved its purpose, and give a reason

Examples of tasks might include:

♦   listing points of information from a simple letter, identifying from a range of choices what it is aiming to do and whether it does it

♦   identifying the main information from and commenting on the usefulness of a simple leaflet or advertisement

♦   explaining the aim and important points in a simple set of instructions and saying if they are helpful

General skill

Read, understand and evaluate straightforward written communication.

Specific skills

♦ give an accurate account of the important ideas or significant information in a written communication

♦ make a basic evaluation of the communication supported by evidence

Further information on the general skill

Reading material should be mainly familiar to candidates and routine to their situation and may include images as well as words. Vocabulary should be familiar to candidates but may include some accessible specialist words. Sentences will usually be simple in structure and there will be a straightforward relationship between paragraphs or other structural divisions. The communication should express its content in a direct, uncomplicated way and key points should be easily identifiable. The purpose of the communication should be embodied in conventions such as layout, use of graphics, and language consistent with the purpose and the intended reader.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ read a written communication (text) which conveys several sets of information and/or a discernible opinion — the text must be non-fiction

♦ extract the main points from that text

♦ say how well the text meets its purpose, referring to aspects of the text such as conventions of layout, format and language used

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ identifying the main issues in a letter of complaint and saying whether it achieves its aim

♦ summarising and evaluating a short magazine article on a new product or process

General skill

Read, understand and evaluate written communication.

Specific skills

♦   identify and summarise significant information, ideas and supporting details in a written communication

♦   evaluate the effectiveness of the communication in meeting its purpose

Further information on the general skill

Reading materials may deal with topics and use vocabulary which candidates may reasonably have been expected to encounter through a general awareness of vocational or current issues. They may sometimes feature unfamiliar, abstract ideas and complexity in tone, point of view or central argument. A suitable text will combine factual content with analysis or present a sustained point of view. It may use some complex vocabulary and sentence structures, as appropriate to purpose and readership, and a structure which allows for exemplification. It may include images (eg diagrams, maps, tables, sketches or photographs) as well as words. The text may have more than one purpose, eg to inform and report or evaluate; to express a reaction and to persuade.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦   read a written communication (text) which combines factual content and analysis and/or presents a sustained opinion or argument — the text must be non-fiction

♦   summarise the significant ideas and detail within the communication, and explain how they are linked

♦   evaluate how well the communication meets its main purpose and the needs of its intended readers by referring to content, style and conventions such as layout, graphics and language

Examples of tasks might include:

♦   summarising a report on proposed health or safety issues and identifying the effectiveness for intended readership in terms of layout, format and language

♦   summarising the features and costs of equipment or training described in a detailed memorandum, evaluating how well the communication achieves the writer's purpose

General skill
Read and understand complex written communication.

Specific skills
♦ identify and summarise all significant information, ideas and supporting details in a complex written communication
♦ evaluate fully the effectiveness of a communication in meeting its purpose and the needs of its intended readership

Further information on the general skill

Reading materials may deal with topics and vocabulary which are abstract and may be unfamiliar to candidates. Information, ideas and meaning will be at a sophisticated level (often characterised by the number and relationship of ideas, by density of detail or by abstraction). The text may use complex/specialist vocabulary and make substantial use of sentences which are internally complex. The structure of the text will allow for exemplification and analysis. The text may include images (eg diagrams, maps, charts, tables, sketches or photographs) as well as words. The text will normally have more than one purpose, eg to inform or report and evaluate; to discuss and to persuade; to express a reaction; to share an experience and to draw conclusions/to recommend.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ read a written communication (text) which is concerned with the presentation, analysis and synthesis of information and/or which explores an issue from several perspectives and/or which presents a sustained and sophisticated argument — the text must be non-fiction

♦ extract, summarise, and provide a full explanation of the relationships between all significant information, ideas and supporting detail within the communication

♦ evaluate fully how well the communication meets its purpose and the needs of its readers. Evidence given in support of this evaluation should include analysis of the relationship between the purpose and intended readership, and an examination of the conventions such as structure, layout, graphics, style, tone and language

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ analysing and summarising a company's annual report, inferring the purpose and commenting on the effectiveness of the presentation
♦ analysing and evaluating a complex article or paper and extracting information relevant to work processes
♦ summarising and evaluating research reports from a professional journal

General skill

Produce very simple written communication.

Specific skills

♦ present appropriate information

♦ use conventions which are mainly appropriate for the purpose

Further information on the general skill

Tasks used for assessment should be very familiar to the candidate and well-practised.

Texts may include images such as simple sketches or photographs in support of the written text. These images may be selected by the candidate from a bank of images or created by the candidate.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ produce a brief written communication which conveys a simple item of information or a simple opinion presented in concrete personal terms

♦ use very simple vocabulary and sentence structures — errors may be present, but these should not prevent the reader from grasping the meaning after further reading

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ making simple log book entries

♦ sending a short note or e-mail

♦ making a simple notice

General skill

Produce simple written communication.

Specific skills

♦ present all essential ideas/information

♦ use a discernible structure

♦ use conventions which are mainly appropriate for the purpose and audience

♦ use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are sufficiently accurate to convey meaning

Further information on the general skill

Tasks used for assessment should be familiar and routine for the candidate.

Texts may include images such as simple maps, sketches, diagrams or photographs in support of the written text. These images may be selected by the candidate from a bank of images or created by the candidate.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ produce a brief written communication which conveys several items of information and/or a discernible personal opinion

♦ use a format, layout and word choice which are appropriate to the purpose and target readership

♦ use simple vocabulary and sentence structures — errors may be present, but these should not prevent the reader from grasping the meaning.

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ writing a short letter or memo requesting information

♦ making log book entries

General skill

Produce simple but detailed written communication.

Specific skills

♦ present all essential ideas/information with some supporting detail in a logical order

♦ use a structure which is mainly appropriate to purpose and audience

♦ use conventions which are appropriate for purpose and audience

♦ use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are mainly accurate

Further information on the general skill

Tasks used for assessment should be mainly familiar to the candidates and routine to their situation.

Texts may include images such as simple diagrams, maps, tables, sketches or photographs in support of the written text. These images may be selected by the candidate from a bank of images or created by the candidate.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ produce a written communication which conveys several sets of information and/or a clearly stated opinion with a measure of generality and objectivity

♦ organise the sets of information/aspects of content into a logical structure, with straightforward relationships between paragraphs or other divisions

♦ use a format, layout and word choice which are appropriate to the purpose and target audience

♦ use spelling, vocabulary and sentence structures accurately enough to convey meaning at first reading

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ completing an accident report supported by maps or diagrams

♦ writing or responding to a letter of complaint about faulty goods

♦ recording detail of procedures in a log/diary

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (WRITING)   INTERMEDIATE 2

General skill

Produce well-structured written communication.

Specific skills

♦   present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order

♦   use a structure which takes account of purpose and audience and emphasises the main points

♦   use conventions which are appropriate for the target audience and effective in achieving the purpose

♦   use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate

♦   vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and target audience

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Further information on the general skill

The communication will have a clearly defined purpose and audience. Information will be presented and analysed, with selection and highlighting of the most significant. Ideas and opinions will be developed and supported by evidence.

Texts may include images (eg tables, diagrams or photographs) in support of the written text. These images may be created by the candidate or selected from a bank of images.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦   produce written communication which is concerned with the presentation and analysis of information and/or with developing an opinion or argument

♦   organise the content into a logical and effective structure, with clear linking between sentences and paragraphs or other structural divisions

♦   use a format, layout and word choice which are appropriate to the target audience and effective in meeting the purpose (eg in a report, appropriate structural subdivisions could be used)

♦   use spelling, vocabulary and sentence structures accurately. This may include some complex vocabulary and sentence structures. Where appropriate, sentences will show accurate handling of clauses. Although a few errors may be present, these will not be significant

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Examples of tasks might include:

♦ a report or an article making a case for change

♦ minutes of a meeting and a detailed follow-up memo on issues discussed

♦ a detailed comparison of equipment with conclusions and recommendations

General skill

Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics.

Specific skills

♦ present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order

♦ use a structure which takes account of purpose and audience and links major and minor points in ways which assist the clarity and impact of the writing

♦ use conventions which are effective in achieving the purpose and adapted as necessary for the target audience

♦ use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate

♦ vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and target audience

Further information on the general skill

The communication will have a clearly defined purpose and readership and appropriate structure. Information will be presented, analysed and evaluated and/or ideas and opinions will be developed in relation to an issue which is explored in depth and considered from several perspectives; taking account of and refuting challenges. Appropriate complex topics may involve large numbers of related ideas, large amounts of detail (where the candidate must present clearly) or discussion of abstract or technical concepts. Texts may include images in support of the written text.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ produce written communication which presents, analyses and evaluates a substantial body of information and/or develops an opinion in relation to an issue which is explored in depth

♦ use a structure and layout which make clear how content has been organised and evaluated, using paragraphing or other structural divisions to make clear the distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusions.

♦ use a format, layout and word choice which are appropriate to the content and context, adapted to meet the needs of the target audience and effective in meeting the purpose. Where a prescribed format is used, it should be used consistently and effectively.

♦ use spelling, vocabulary and sentence structures accurately and vary these to clarify aspects of content. Sentences may be internally complex and some complex language may be used, including some specialist vocabulary. Although a few errors may be present, these will not be significant

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ a detailed report to management on the incidence and causes of recent accidents with suggestions on how to improve health and safety

♦ a detailed analysis of IT capability and usage with recommendations for change

♦ a formal write up of a complex practical investigation or research project

ORAL COMMUNICATION

General skill

Produce and respond to very simple oral communication.

Specific skills

♦ convey at least one very simple item of information, opinion or idea

♦ use an adequate range of spoken language structures

♦ take account of situation and audience during delivery

♦ take account of the contributions of others

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ take part in a very simple interaction with one or more people — this will usually be a brief discussion on a very simple, familiar topic

♦ use language that the listener(s) understands. There may be weaknesses in the candidate's use of vocabulary, register and sentence structures but these should not prevent communication with others

♦ in the main, speak loudly enough for listeners to hear

♦ occasionally use appropriate non-verbal conventions (eg making appropriate eye contact once or twice, pausing at appropriate points)

♦ respond to others appropriately (eg by repeating information or answering a question)

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ exchanging relevant personal details with another person

♦ discussing with others how a simple task is progressing

General skill

Produce and respond to simple oral communication.

Specific skills

- ♦ convey simple information, opinions or ideas
- ♦ attempt to sequence and link information, opinions or ideas
- ♦ use an appropriate range of spoken language structures
- ♦ take account of situation and audience during delivery
- ♦ respond to others, taking account of their contributions

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

- ♦ take part in a simple interaction with one or more people — this will usually be a discussion on a simple topic
- ♦ convey information, opinions or ideas at a simple level
- ♦ sequence and link to present information clearly and in order (eg giving directions in the correct order)
- ♦ use simple vocabulary in an appropriate register. Vocabulary and sentence structures will allow the speaker's meaning to be conveyed
- ♦ speak loudly enough for listeners to hear
- ♦ use appropriate non-verbal conventions (eg making appropriate eye contact or gestures, pausing at appropriate points)
- ♦ respond to others appropriately (eg by repeating information, or asking or answering questions)

Examples of tasks might include:

- ♦ giving directions to a visitor as to how to reach a particular place or area
- ♦ making a brief telephone call to ask for information
- ♦ discussing with others the progress of a task or project

General skill

Produce and respond to straightforward oral communication.

Specific skills

- ♦   convey appropriate information, opinions and/or ideas
- ♦   sequence and link information, opinions and ideas
- ♦   use appropriate vocabulary and an appropriate range of spoken language structures
- ♦   take account of situation and audience during delivery
- ♦   respond to others, taking account of their contributions

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Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

- ♦   take part in a straightforward interaction with one or more people — this will usually be a discussion on a straightforward topic, although candidates may also deliver a short talk with questions and answers
- ♦   convey several items of information, opinions or ideas
- ♦   sequence and link to present information clearly and in order (eg giving instructions in the correct order; giving a short talk with a recognisable beginning and end and basic linkage)
- ♦   use vocabulary, register and sentence structures which are mainly appropriate to purpose and audience. There should be some attempt to vary these as appropriate (eg rephrasing a point in simpler terms to aid the understanding of others)
- ♦   speak loudly enough for listeners to hear and try to vary pace and tone
- ♦   use appropriate non-verbal conventions (eg making appropriate eye contact, posture or gestures, pausing at appropriate points)
- ♦   take account of the contributions of others (eg by listening and responding to points of view, answering questions, asking questions to clarify or expanding points briefly if necessary)

Examples of tasks might include:

- ♦   giving a short informal talk and answering questions on some aspect of work undertaken
- ♦   taking part in a simple interview
- ♦   making contributions involving some degree of detail to a group discussion on a simple topic

General skill

Produce and respond to oral communication.

Specific skills

♦ convey all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently
♦ show skill in sequencing and linking information, opinions and/or ideas
♦ use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures appropriate to purpose and audience
♦ take account of situation and audience during delivery
♦ respond to others, taking account of their contributions

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ take part in a spoken interaction with one or more people. This may be a discussion which has a clear purpose, is on a relevant topic and allows for exploration and the reaching of consensus — the candidate must make a significant contribution. Alternatively, the candidate can deliver a presentation which includes significant interaction with the audience. The presentation may be supported by images (eg illustrations, OHP, slides, handouts, models or images using IT or multimedia tools)
♦ convey all essential information or ideas (eg by developing an argument containing several sets of information or by giving a demonstration or by exploring an issue in some detail)
♦ sequence and link to present information clearly and in order (eg in a presentation, give an overview in the introduction, present information in a logical sequence and give a conclusion summarising the main points)
♦ use vocabulary, register and sentence structures which are appropriate to a clear purpose and audience. These should be varied as necessary. Some formal language may be used (eg use of specialist vocabulary)
♦ speak loudly enough for listeners to hear and adjust pace and modulation to meet the needs of the audience
♦ make appropriate use of eye contact, posture and gesture
♦ take account of the contributions of others (eg by listening and responding to points of view, answering questions, asking questions to clarify or explore in greater depth, summarising or expanding on points made)

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ making a presentation using visual aids
♦ taking part in a meeting or interview with other(s) in order to decide on a preferred course of action

General skill

Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic.

Specific skills

♦ use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures consistently and effectively at an appropriate level of formality

♦ convey all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently and with varied emphasis as appropriate

♦ structure communication to take full account of purpose and audience

♦ take account of situation and audience during delivery

♦ respond to others, taking account of their contributions

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:

♦ take part in a spoken interaction with one or more people. This may be a formal meeting/discussion with a clear remit to explore an issue in depth and reach conclusions. Candidates must make a significant and sustained contribution to the discussion which should allow for identification of key elements and exploration of points of view on a complex issue. Alternatively, the candidate can deliver a structured oral presentation which presents, analyses and evaluates a substantial body of information. The presentation should include significant, sustained interaction with and responses to the questions and points of view of the audience. An oral presentation should be supported where appropriate by images (eg OHP, slides, illustrations, models or images using IT or multimedia tools)

♦ convey all essential information or ideas. Although the topic may be complex, the candidate may simplify elements by identifying and expanding on key aspects, possibly in response to questions

♦ use vocabulary, register and sentence structures which are consistently appropriate to purpose and audience and varied effectively. Some complex or specialist vocabulary may be used

♦ integrate the use of formal language and non-verbal conventions, with conscious variation in tone, pace and modulation adjusted to audience needs. Skilled use will be made of eye contact, posture and gesture

♦ respond to others as appropriate (eg by listening; answering questions; asking questions to clarify or explore responses in greater depth; analysing, summarising, expanding, reflecting on or synthesising the points of view expressed)

Examples of tasks might include:

♦ making a formal presentation which collates, analyses and presents conclusions on findings from a substantial project or piece of research

♦ making a significant contribution based on prior preparation and investigation to a formal meeting with a clear remit

General skill

Apply very simple numerical skills in familiar everyday contexts.

Specific skills

♦   recognise and use some basic numerical notation
♦   decide on one numerical operation to be carried out
♦   carry out very simple numerical calculations

Further information on the general skill

Familiar everyday contexts might involve money, time, length, weight, temperature.   The context will involve obvious, given variables which are familiar to the candidate.

Calculations may be carried out mentally, in writing or by calculator.   Candidates should check answers in relation to context but evidence of checking is not required.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
♦   use notations for two of the following: whole numbers, simple decimals, simple fractions
♦   carry out all of the following calculations — addition, subtraction, simple multiplication and simple division of whole numbers.

Tasks could include:
♦   working out very simple financial transactions
♦   adding numbers in a group
♦   dividing portions of food

General skill

Apply simple numerical skills in everyday contexts.

Specific skills

♦ work with basic numerical notation
♦ decide on the numerical operations to be carried out
♦ carry out simple numerical calculations

Further information on the general skill

Contexts might involve money, time, length, weight, area, volume, or temperature. Tasks will be familiar and involve only a small number of obvious variables.

Calculations may be carried out mentally, in writing or by calculator. Candidates may give exact or approximate answers as appropriate. Candidates should check answers, although evidence of checking is not required.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
• use notations for all of the following: whole numbers, decimals, percentages, fractions, simple ratios (eg 1:3, 5:1)
• decide which operations are to be carried out (eg add and multiply) and the order in which to carry them out. At this level, candidates must show that they can carry out calculations involving two operations.
• carry out all of the following calculations — addition, subtraction, multiplication, division
• carry out calculations involving one of the following: whole number percentages, unitary fractions (eg ¾), simple formulae in words

Examples of tasks might include:
♦ calculating a floor area
♦ calculating the effect of a 10% pay rise
♦ calculating total working hours needed for a task
♦ expressing the pattern of tables and chairs in a room in a formula such as 'Number of seats is the number of tables plus two'

General skill

Apply a range of straightforward numerical skills in everyday contexts.

Specific skills

- ♦ work confidently with basic numerical notation
- ♦ decide on the numerical operations to be carried out
- ♦ carry out straightforward calculations

Further information on the general skill

Contexts might involve money, time (including the 24 hour clock), length, weight, area, volume, or temperature.

Calculations may be carried out mentally, in writing or by calculator. It is assumed that candidates will be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide but evidence of all of the basic operations is not required. Candidates will round answers to a given degree of accuracy (eg to two decimal places or three significant figures). Candidates should check answers, although evidence of checking is not required.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
- ♦ use notations for all of the following: whole numbers, decimals, percentages, fractions, simple ratios (eg 1:3, 5:1)
- ♦ decide which operations are to be carried out (eg add and multiply) and the order in which to carry them out. At this level, candidates must show that they can carry out calculations involving three operations
- ♦ carry out calculations with whole numbers and decimals
- ♦ carry out calculations involving two of the following: percentages, fractions, simple ratios, simple formulae in symbols

Examples of tasks might include:
- ♦ calculating the volume required to store a defined weight of a product
- ♦ calculating the ratio of male to female in a group
- ♦ mileage calculations for travel expenses
- ♦ using a formula such as f=ma

General skill

Apply a wide range of numerical skills in everyday and generalised contexts.

Specific skills

♦   work confidently with a numerical concept
♦   decide on the numerical operations to be carried out
♦   carry out complex calculations or a number of sustained calculations

Further information on the general skill

Tasks may be set in unfamiliar contexts where the relevant facts and their importance need to be clarified or in more familiar contexts where a general or theoretical approach is needed.

Calculations may be carried out mentally, in writing or by calculator. It is assumed that candidates will be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals, and to work with fractions, percentages and ratios as appropriate, but evidence of all of these is not required. Candidates will round answers to an appropriate degree of accuracy (eg to two decimal places or three significant figures). Candidates should check answers, although evidence of checking is not required.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
♦   solve problems involving one numerical or statistical concept (eg negative numbers, quantitative and qualitative data, discrete and continuous data, numbers represented by symbols, or a statistical concept such as range)
♦   decide which operations are to be carried out and the order in which to carry them out. At this level, candidates must show that they can carry out calculations involving four operations
♦   carry out a number of sustained calculations or at least one complex calculation (eg a calculation involving scientific indices, or a complex statistical calculation such as calculating standard deviation)

Examples of tasks might include:
♦   calculating annual profit and loss from monthly returns
♦   in an engineering context, dealing with an example involving the relationships between work done, force and distance
♦   using a number line or working with sub-zero temperatures

General skill

Apply in combination a wide range of numerical, statistical and other mathematical skills to process complex information in generalised contexts.

Specific skills

♦   work confidently with a numerical or statistical concept

♦   decide on the steps and operations to be carried out

♦   carry out a number of sustained, complex calculations

Further information on the general skill

Tasks may involve unfamiliar contexts where the relevant facts and their importance need to be clarified. Generalised contexts include situations where the candidate has to deal with problems in a more general way, or at a more theoretical level, eg by creating a model of a situation.

Calculations may be carried out mentally, in writing or by calculator. It is assumed that candidates will be able to add, subtract, multiply, divide whole numbers and decimals, and to work with fractions, percentages and ratios as appropriate but evidence of all of these is not required. Candidates will round answers to an appropriate degree of accuracy (eg to two decimal places or three significant figures). Candidates should check answers, although evidence of checking is not required.

Further information on the specific skill

The candidate must:

♦   solve problems involving one numerical or statistical concept (eg relationships in symbolic form, negative numbers, quantitative and qualitative data, discrete and continuous data, numbers represented by symbols, or statistical concepts such as standard deviation or confidence limits)

♦   decide which steps are to be carried out and the order in which to carry them out. At this level, candidates must show that they can carry out calculations involving five steps. Some of these steps might involve more than one numerical operation.

♦   carry out sustained, complex calculations (eg use of formulae in symbolic form, calculations using indices (scientific notation), calculation of standard deviation, manipulation of symbols, addition/subtraction/multiplication/division of fractions)

Examples of tasks might include:

♦   calculations involving complex financial data

♦   in an engineering context, calculating relationships between kinetic energy, mass and speed

♦   using a number line or working with sub-zero temperatures

♦   distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative data in surveys

General skill

Read and use very simple graphical information in familiar everyday contexts.

Specific skills

- read and use a very simple scale
- identify information in very simple tables
- identify information in very simple diagrams
- communicate information in very simple tables and diagrams with support

Further information on the general skill

Familiar everyday contexts might involve calendars, work timetables or schedules or transport timetables — the candidate should be able to work in such contexts with support.

Tables and diagrams should be designed for the candidate to complete with support as required.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
- read and use a very simple scale, on which every division is numbered
- use a familiar measuring instrument to measure to the nearest marked number *or* use the scale on a graph to determine qualities to the nearest marked number
- identify information from a very simple table containing one category of information
- identify information from a very simple diagram (eg a diagram of very simple 2D shapes such as squares or rectangles, a very simple diagram of furniture in a room or a very simple map)
- communicate information by inserting information to complete partially completed tables and diagrams

Examples of tasks might be:
- measuring with a ruler, metre stick or tape measure
- weighing ingredients with household scales
- taking the temperature of a room with a thermometer
- finding bus departure times from a table showing one destination
- finding the price of components from a table showing prices for different sizes of one item
- identifying local places on a street plan

General skill

Interpret and communicate simple graphical information in everyday contexts.

Specific skills

♦　read and use a simple scale
♦　extract information from three of the following: simple tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
♦　communicate information in simple tables, graphs, charts or diagrams as appropriate

Further information on the general skill

Timetables or schedules, catalogue or brochure tables, or distance/time graphs would provide suitable contexts.

Tables, graphs, charts and diagrams should be selected and designed for the candidate to complete. In the case of a graph involving a scale, the scale should be given.
Communication in simple diagrams should only involve two dimensional shapes.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
♦　read and use a simple scale on which the unnumbered divisions are clear (eg a scale with 0 and 10 labelled and five subdivisions)
♦　use the scale on a measuring instrument to measure to the nearest marked number *or* use the scale on a graph to determine quantities to the nearest marked number
♦　extract information from three of the following:
　　— a simple table containing two categories of information
　　— a simple chart, (eg a bar or pie chart)
　　— a simple graph (eg a line graph with a simple scale)
　　— a simple diagram (eg a diagram of a 2D shape, a 2D representation of a familiar 3D shape, nets of cube and cuboid, a simple map)
♦　communicate information by inserting information to complete partially completed tables, graphs, charts or diagrams

Examples of tasks might be:
♦　measuring with a ruler, metre stick or tape measure
♦　calculating the cost of postage from a table showing the cost of posting packages of different weights by first or second class
♦　specifying a popular destination from a simple chart
♦　drawing a simple map
♦　completing a fuel consumption chart for cars

General skill

Interpret and communicate straightforward graphical information in everyday contexts.

Specific skills

♦   read and use a straightforward scale
♦   extract information from straightforward tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
♦   communicate information in straightforward tables, graphs, charts or diagrams as appropriate

Further information on the general skill

Work timetables or schedules, transport timetables or distance/time graphs would provide suitable contexts. It is assumed that the candidate will be familiar with the range of common forms of tables, graphs, charts and diagrams in everyday use, but evidence of each of these is not required.

The form in which the candidate will communicate information should be specified for the candidate.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
♦   read and use a straightforward scale with all main divisions numbered and requiring a minimal amount of interpolation.
♦   use a measuring instrument to measure to the nearest marked division *or* use the scale on a graph to determine qualities to the nearest marked division.
♦   interpret information from at least one of the following:
     — a table containing three or four categories of information
     — a chart (eg a bar or pie chart)
     — a graph (eg a line graph) with a straightforward scale
     — a straightforward diagram eg simple circuit diagram, food web, a 2D representation of 3D shapes, a map)
♦   communicate information in tables, graphs, charts or diagrams

Examples of tasks might be:
♦   measuring ingredients by volume
♦   making recommendations by pricing a business trip using a table showing prices according to the date of departure, hotel chosen, length of stay
♦   interpreting a distance/time line graph to explain that when the line is horizontal the vehicle is at rest
♦   producing a simple circuit diagram or map

General skill

Interpret and communicate graphical information in everyday and generalised contexts.

Specific skills

♦ interpret information from tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
♦ select an appropriate form of tables, graphs, charts or diagrams and communicate information in that form

Further information on the general skill

The candidate should interpret information which has either been presented as a number of related, straightforward forms or in one complex form. Interpreting information must go beyond simply extracting information and includes, where appropriate, interpolation and extrapolation.

The candidate will be familiar with a range of common graphical forms, and must choose an appropriate form in which to convey information.

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
♦ interpret information presented in a complex graphical form (eg qualitative graphs; graphs where part of the axis has been omitted; histograms; stem and leaf chart; graphs showing concepts/relationship such as cumulative frequency or complex variables)
or:
♦ interpret information from a series of straightforward, interconnected tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
♦ communicate information in an appropriate form using tables, graphs, charts or diagrams

Examples of tasks might be:
♦ estimating future consumable needs from a project time plan
♦ calculating acceleration from a velocity/time graph
♦ calculating the number in a specific age group from a population pyramid
♦ producing a histogram showing customer breakdown by age, gender and income bracket

General skill

Apply a wide range of graphical skills to interpret and present complex information in generalised contexts.

Specific skills

♦   analyse and interpret complex graphical information
♦   select an appropriate form of table, graph, chart, diagram or qualitative form and communicate information in that form

Further information on the general skill

The candidate should analyse and interpret information which has been presented in complex graphical forms (eg statistical data in graphical format).

The candidate will be familiar with a range of common graphical forms, and must choose an appropriate form in which to convey information. The form may be qualitative (eg a graph with no scales on the axes showing a relationship or trend).

Further information on the specific skills

The candidate must:
♦   identify significant features in complex graphical information (eg patterns, discontinuities, rates of change, turning values, relationships between variables) and interpret these in relation to the underlying variables
♦   communicate information in an appropriate form (eg table, line graph, bar chart, pie chart, stem and leaf chart, histogram, diagram or qualitative form such as a graph with no scale on the axes)

Examples of tasks might be:
♦   using socio-economic information from a census to estimate market potential for a product
♦   interpreting data on share prices from stock exchange results
♦   reading weather maps
♦   producing a series of charts to demonstrate staff turnover rates for different levels of staff

General skill

Use a familiar IT system to perform very simple tasks with assistance if required.

Specific skills

♦   carry out very simple operations on a computer system using keyboard, mouse or other appropriate device
♦   carry out very simple processing in a familiar software application
♦   find and present information from a familiar electronic data source

Further information

The candidate must:
♦   use menus to select items
♦   load a file from hard drive, floppy drive or CD familiar to the candidate
♦   save an already named document
♦   enter, edit and output data in a given format in a text processing or other application
♦   find information using a single identifying criterion. The criterion could be a key term, field, file name or other characteristic. The information may be textual, numerical, graphical, images, video, audio or data sets
♦   present this information by displaying on screen or outputting in printed or other appropriate mode

When extracting and presenting information from an electronic data source, candidates may use either a local or remote source that is familiar to them. The data source may be identified for candidates and may be one that they have helped to construct, such as a very simple filing system, database or help text.

General skill

Using an IT system to perform simple tasks.

Specific skills

♦   carry out simple operations on a computer system using keyboard, mouse or other appropriate device
♦   carry out simple processing in two types of software application
♦   find and present information from a familiar electronic data source

Further information

The candidate must:
♦   use menus to select items
♦   load a file from hard drive, floppy drive or CD familiar to the candidate
♦   save an existing file
♦   enter, edit and output data in a given format in two types of software application
♦   find information using a single identifying criterion. The criterion could be a key term, field, file name or other characteristic. The information may be textual, numerical, graphical, images, video, audio or data sets
♦   present this information by displaying on screen or outputting in printed or other appropriate mode

The two types of application can be chosen from text processing, spreadsheet, database, simulation, sound generation, drawing, painting, educational/training or other appropriate application.

When extracting and presenting information from an electronic data source, candidates may use either a local or remote source which is familiar to them. The data source may be identified for candidates and may be one which they have helped to construct, such as a filing system, simple database or help text.

USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY   **INTERMEDIATE 1**

General skill

Using an IT system effectively to perform a range of straightforward tasks.

Specific skills

♦   make effective use of a computer system including keyboard, mouse, monitor, disk drive and printer
♦   carry out straightforward processing in three types of software application
♦   carry out two straightforward searches to find and present relevant information from electronic data sources

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Further information

The candidate must:
♦   find and start up applications
♦   locate data
♦   use straightforward tools, eg file manager, print manager and control panels
♦   organise folders and sub directories
♦   apply naming conventions
♦   copy and delete files and folders
♦   enter, edit and output data in a given format in two types of software application
♦   carry out two straightforward searches
♦   find information using two criteria (eg key term, or field) from relevant data, eg records in a database. The information may be textual, numerical, graphical, images, video, audio or data sets
♦   present this information by displaying on screen or outputting in printed or other appropriate mode

Candidates must produce work which is accurate and meets the desired purpose, within a reasonable timescale.

The two types of application can be chosen from text processing, spreadsheet, database, simulation, graphics, audio/music, desktop publishing, communications, data logging and control or other appropriate application. The different applications can be contained within an integrated package. All basic features of any application package should be used as appropriate

When searching, extracting and presenting information from an electronic data source, candidates may use either a local or remote source such as local data, on-line database or CD-ROM. The data source should either be familiar to the candidate or have a structure for searching which offers straightforward choices. The two searches must involve either different data sets (eg from different topics/subjects), different forms of search (eg menu or open choice), or different forms of information (eg text, numbers, images).

General skill

Using an IT system effectively and responsibly to process a range of information.

Specific skills

♦   make effective and responsible use of the range of IT equipment in everyday use
♦   carry out straightforward processing in two types of software application
♦   carry out complex processes to use one further application in depth
♦   integrate different types of data in a piece of work
♦   carry out two searches to extract and present relevant information from electronic data sources

Further information

The candidate must:
♦   use mouse, keyboard, printer, monitor, disk drive, processor or other hardware as appropriate
♦   keep data secure and well-managed, eg by performing back-ups, using passwords, using virus protection measures
♦   for all three applications, enter, edit and output data in a format suited to the purpose, or to meet a given specification
♦   in one application, carry out two or more complex processes to apply skills in depth (eg prepare documents using a word processor, using at least two from spell checker, styles, templates, tables or indexer to improve style and layout)
♦   integrate two different types of data (eg text, number, graphics, sound, video) within one piece of work
♦   carry out two searches requiring some decisions about an effective search strategy (eg taking account of time, cost, effective filtering and outcome)
♦   extract information using several criteria (eg key term, or field). The information may be textual, numerical, graphical, images, video, audio or data sets
♦   present this information by displaying on screen or outputting in printed or other appropriate mode

Candidates must make effective and responsible use of hardware devices and software applications, demonstrating due attention to other users.

The three types of software application can be chosen from text processing, database, spreadsheet, simulation, graphics, communications, animation, audio/music, video/multi-media, desk-top publishing, data retrieval, data logging and control, or other appropriate package. Use of still images may require the use of screen grabber, digital camera or scanner. The different applications can be contained within an integrated package as in music sequencing and processing software.

When searching, extracting and presenting information from an electronic data source, candidates may use either a local or remote source. The data source should require several straightforward choices or have a less obvious structure or more complex inter-relationships. The two searches must involve different data sets, different forms of search (eg menu, open choice) or different types of data.

General skill

Using an IT system independently to process a range of information.

Specific skills

♦ use a range of IT equipment, paying attention to security and other users
♦ resolve one simple hardware or software problem
♦ use software in an unfamiliar context requiring some analysis and design, integration of data and decision on output format
♦ carry out two searches to extract and present relevant information from electronic data sources

Further information

The candidate must:
♦ keep data secure and well-managed, eg by maintaining personal file area and locating files and applications as appropriate, logging on/off, using passwords, performing back ups, using virus protection measures
♦ be able to correct simple faults in cable connections, device settings and/or software option settings, eg printer off-line, sound not working, too many open programs, system freeze
♦ use three or more applications to create documents, designs, compositions or models, using presentation styles appropriate to the context. This must include two from different types of data, eg graphics, video, audio, text, numbers
♦ output information in a format suited to purpose or to meet a given specification
♦ carry out two searches requiring some decisions about an effective search strategy (eg taking account of time, cost, effective filtering and outcome)
♦ extract information using several criteria (eg key term, or field). The information may be textual, numerical, graphical, images, video, audio or data sets
♦ present this information by displaying on screen or outputting in printed or other appropriate mode

Candidates should operate with minimum support from assessors, supervisors, colleagues or technicians and make use of on-line help, package help facilities or supplier's manuals. Candidates must make effective and responsible use of hardware devices (processor, monitor, keyboard, mouse, disk drive, printer or other device, as appropriate) and software applications. Candidates should be aware of common hardware and software problems.

Candidates will use software to process complex information, working in a context which requires some element of design and selection, such as choosing appropriate software or designing the presentation style of a written or oral presentation, or customising an application for purpose/context.

Use of still images may involve the use of screen grabber, digital camera or scanner. The different applications can be contained within an integrated package.

When searching, extracting and presenting information from an electronic data source, candidates may use either a local or remote source. The data source should require several straightforward choices or have a less obvious structure or more complex inter-relationships. The two searches must involve different data sets, different forms of search (eg menu, open choice) or different types of data.

General skill

Analyse a very simple familiar situation or issue.

Specific skills

♦   recognise some main features of the situation or issue
♦   identify a process to deal with the situation or issue, prompted by reference to previous experience

Further information

Candidates should be dealing with a routine situation or issue in a context which is familiar. There will be a small number of variables and/or relationships — these will be identified for the candidate. Within this context, the candidate should recognise which of these variables and/or relationships are of most importance to the situation. Thereafter candidates should, with prompting, suggest a routine, familiar course of action to address the situation, based on their previous experience.

General skill

Analyse a simple situation or issue.

Specific skills

♦   **recognise the main features of the situation or issue**
♦   **identify a process to deal with the situation or issue**

Further information

Candidates should be dealing with a situation or issue in a context which is familiar to them. There will be a small number of obvious variables and the relationships between these will be clear to the candidate. In a less familiar situation, the variables and/or relationships should be already identified and understood by the candidate. Within this context, the candidate should identify the main variables and the relationships between them. Thereafter, candidates should suggest a routine, familiar course of action to address the situation, based on their previous experience.

General skill

Analyse a straightforward situation or issue.

Specific skills

♦   identify the main features of the situation or issue
♦   select an approach to deal with the situation or issue

Further information

Candidates should be dealing with a situation/issue in a context which is familiar to them. There will be a limited number of variables and the relationships between these will be clear. Within this context, the candidate should identify the variables and the relationship between them. Thereafter the candidate should evaluate the situation — this might include summarising, explaining or drawing conclusions — or devise a strategy (ie a technique, procedure or a course of action) to deal with the situation. There may be several, obvious straightforward approaches to select from, including making a simple modification to a known process.

General skill

Analyse a situation or issue.

Specific skills

♦   identify the factors involved in the situation or issue
♦   assess the relevance of these factors to the situation or issue
♦   develop an approach to deal with the situation or issue

Further information

Candidates can deal with a situation/issue in a context which is familiar to them where the relationship between the variables requires to be clarified. Alternatively candidates can deal with a situation in an unfamiliar context where relationships between variables are clear. Within this context the candidate should identify the variables and the relationship between them. Thereafter the candidate should evaluate the situation — this might include summarising, explaining or drawing conclusions — or devise a strategy (ie a technique, procedure or a course of action) to deal with the situation. They may devise a new approach or select and/or modify an existing approach.

General skill

Analyse a complex situation or issue.

Specific skills

♦ identify the factors involved in the situation or issue
♦ assess the relevance of these factors to the situation or issue
♦ develop and justify an approach to deal with the situation or issue

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Further information

Candidates will deal with a situation/issue where variables may be complex or unfamiliar, relationships need to be clarified and the context may be unfamiliar. Within this context, the candidate should identify the variables and the relationships between them, analysing the significance and relevance of each variable. Thereafter the candidate should evaluate the situation — this might include summarising, explaining or drawing conclusions — or identify a strategy (eg a technique, procedure or a course of action) to deal with the situation. They may devise a new approach or select and/or modify an existing approach. The approach must be justified, for example by accounting for the factors or evidence involved, by referring to the resources and time available, and/or by comparison with other possible approaches.

General skill

Plan, organise and complete a very simple, familiar task.

Specific skills

♦   identify some very simple steps in the plan
♦   select appropriate resources to carry out the plan
♦   carry out the task

Further information

Candidates will complete a task with a small number of given, clear steps. The resources will be appropriate to the task and might include information, set procedures, people, equipment or physical resources. The candidate must decide how the task will be carried out and then complete it. At all stages, the candidate may need some prompting referring to previous experience.

General skill

Plan, organise and complete a simple task.

Specific skills

♦   identify the sequence of steps in the plan
♦   select appropriate resources to carry out the plan
♦   carry out the task

Further information

Candidates will complete a familiar task with a small number of steps. If the task is less familiar, the steps should be given and clear. The resources should be selected from a familiar range of common resources or from a given range of familiar resources. The resources will be appropriate to the task and might include sources of information, set procedures, people, equipment/physical resources. The candidate must decide how the task will be managed and carry it out — this could include allocation of tasks to others.

PLANNING AND ORGANISING   **INTERMEDIATE 1**

General skill

Plan, organise and complete a straightforward task.

Specific skills

♦   develop a plan
♦   identify and obtain resources to carry out the plan
♦   carry out the task

Further information

Candidates will complete a task in a familiar context. The task will have several obvious possible approaches or involve modifying a known plan, with a limited number of steps/variables, where relationships are clear. The plan will be linear. The resources should be appropriate to the task, and might include sources of information, set procedures, people, and physical resources such as equipment or accommodation. The candidate will select these from a range of familiar sources. The candidate must decide how the task will be managed and carry it out — this could include allocation of tasks in a group context.

General skill

Plan, organise and complete a task.

Specific skills

♦   develop a plan
♦   identify and obtain resources to carry out the plan
♦   carry out the task

Further information

Candidates will complete a task in an unfamiliar context where relationships are clear. Alternatively, if candidates are working in a familiar context, the relationships between variables should be unfamiliar. The candidate will develop a plan which might involve branching, that is, more than one concurrent strand. The candidate will identify and obtain the necessary resources, selecting these from a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar sources, possibly involving a search. The resources will be appropriate to the task and might include sources of information, set procedures, people, equipment/physical resources. The candidate must decide how the task will be managed and carry it out — this could include allocation of tasks in a group context.

General skill

Plan, organise and complete a complex task.

Specific skills

♦   develop a plan
♦   identify and obtain resources to carry out the plan
♦   carry out the task

Further information

Candidates should be dealing with a task with a large number of variables in an unfamiliar context where relationships may be unfamiliar. The plan is likely to involve more than one concurrent strand and a review or opportunity to adjust the strategy. The candidate must identify and obtain resources, selecting these from a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar sources, possibly involving a search. The resources will be appropriate to the task and might include sources of information, set procedures, people, equipment and physical resources. The candidate must decide how the task will be managed and carry it out — this could include allocation of tasks in a group context.

General skill

Review and evaluate a very simple, familiar problem solving activity.

Specific skills

♦ given some simple criteria, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the solution to the problem

Further information

Candidates will be dealing with a familiar activity set in a familiar context, involving a small number of obvious variables.

The candidate must:
♦ identify the strengths and weaknesses of a solution, with some prompting, referring to previous experience
♦ use given simple criteria, which might be in the form of questions on the effectiveness of, eg time, resources, people

General skill

Review and evaluate a simple problem solving activity.

Specific skills

♦ identify the strengths and weaknesses of the solution to the problem
♦ use given simple criteria

Further information

Candidates will be dealing with an activity set in a familiar context, involving a small number of obvious variables and simple task management.

The candidate must:
♦ identify the strengths and weaknesses of the solution to the problem — in a simple activity the solution or outcome is likely to be the main or only source of evidence for evaluation
♦ use given simple criteria, which might include questions on, eg appropriateness of action, resources used, or workability of the solution or outcome

General skill

Review and evaluate a straightforward problem solving activity.

Specific skills

♦ identify the strengths and weaknesses of the problem solving strategy
♦ draw a conclusion

Further information

Candidates will be dealing with an activity set in a familiar context, involving a limited number of factors and straightforward task management.

The candidate must:
♦ identify the strengths and weaknesses of all stages of the problem solving strategy — ie analysing the situation, planning and organising the task and the outcome of the activity
♦ clearly refer to evidence on aspects of the strategy such as whether all factors were identified; effectiveness of the strategy and planning; suitability of resources; or appropriateness of the outcome
♦ draw a conclusion — this should refer to and consider the evidence. The conclusion might involve suggesting an alternative or modification to the strategy or plan, making a prediction or a generalisation

General skill

Review and evaluate a problem solving activity.

Specific skills

♦ evaluate the effectiveness of the problem solving strategy and assess/explain the relevance of the evidence

♦ draw conclusions and justify them with reference to the evidence

Further information

The candidate can deal with an activity in an unfamiliar context where the relationships between factors are clear. Alternatively, the candidate can deal with an activity in a familiar context where relationships need to be clarified. In both cases, the plan is likely to involve more than one strand and the resources used will be less familiar.

The candidate must:

♦ evaluate all stages of the problem solving strategy, ie analysing the situation, planning and organising the task and the outcome of the activity. They may do this using criteria which they have devised. Alternatively, candidates could select evaluation criteria from a range provided or adopt or adapt a set of established criteria

♦ explain the supporting evidence — this must include some assessment or explanation which goes beyond a mere restatement of the evidence

♦ draw conclusions — this might involve suggestions for alternative or modified strategies or further work; or making predictions or generalisations. The conclusions should be appropriate and supported by the available evidence

General skill

Review and evaluate a complex problem solving activity.

Specific skills

♦   evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy/strategies
♦   identify and gather appropriate evidence
♦   draw conclusions and make recommendations

Further information

Candidates will be dealing with an activity where the factors involved may be numerous, complex or unfamiliar, where relationships need to be clarified and where the task management itself is complex.

The candidate must:
♦   analyse the effectiveness of all aspects of a problem solving strategy — ie analysing the situation, planning and organising the task and the outcome of the activity. Evaluation should include reference to any modifications to the strategy during the course of the activity or to alternative strategies considered. Candidates may devise their own criteria for evaluation or adopt/adapt a set of established criteria
♦   identify and gather appropriate evidence to support the evaluation — sources of evidence might include use of qualitative/quantitative methods; comparisons with other systems or products; impact studies; product testing; or market research
♦   draw conclusions — candidates should consider all the evidence coherently with no major aspect omitted
♦   make recommendations — the full set of conclusions should be drawn on in making recommendations. Recommendations could include suggestions for improvements to a product, process, system or event; the need for further evidence or in-depth investigation; use of an alternative strategy in future

General skill

Work with others in a group to complete a simple, familiar activity under supervision.

Specific skills

♦ agree allocation of tasks, taking account of own preferences
♦ seek and provide information from/to others as required
♦ identify strengths and/or weaknesses of own contribution to group activity

Further information

The group activity should be capable of being broken down into very simple tasks and should be similar to activities already practised by the candidate.

The candidate must:
♦ with support, describe his/her own preferences and agree which group members will carry out particular tasks
♦ seek and give information
♦ evaluate his/her own contribution to the group activity, using some very simple criteria or questions as prompts

The candidate will need support to explain his/her personal preferences regarding tasks to be undertaken and to allocate and carry out these tasks taking account of these preferences. The candidate may need prompting to seek and give information. Co-operative working relationships should be fostered throughout.

Very simple criteria or structured questions should be provided for the candidate to use in identifying the strengths and/or weaknesses he/she showed in the group activity.

General skill

Work with others in a group to complete a simple activity.

Specific skills

♦   agree allocation of tasks taking account of own preferences

♦   seek and provide information from/to others

♦   identify strengths and/or weaknesses of own contribution to group activity

Further information

The group activity should have a clear aim and be capable of being broken down into simple tasks, specified by the candidate.

The candidate must:

♦   describe own preferences and agree which group members will carry out particular tasks

♦   seek and give information

♦   evaluate own contribution to group activity, using some simple criteria

The candidate may need some support to explain his/her own personal preferences and to agree the tasks to be undertaken. The candidate will then adhere to his/her allocated responsibilities. Co-operative working relationships should be fostered throughout.

Simple criteria or structured questions should be provided for the candidate to use in identifying the strengths and/or weaknesses he/she showed in the group activity.

General skill

Work with others in a group to complete a straightforward activity.

Specific skills

♦   identify the main tasks which make up the activity
♦   agree allocation of responsibilities taking account of group members' strengths and
    preferences
♦   seek and provide information and support from/to others as required
♦   identify strengths and/or weaknesses of own contribution to group activity, and justify
    this by referring to supporting evidence

Further information

The overall goal for the group activity should be specified for candidates. The group activity
should be capable of being broken down into separate tasks which should be obvious but
which must be identified by the candidates themselves.

The candidate must:
♦   work with others to establish the individual tasks in the activity
♦   identify group strengths and preferences and agree responsibilities
♦   seek and offer support to others, eg by encouraging, sharing resources, demonstrating, or
    explaining
♦   identify and evaluate own contribution to group activity

Candidates may need prompting to identify the group's collective strengths and weaknesses
as well as their own individual strengths/weaknesses, and account should be taken of this
when allocating responsibilities. Candidates will then adhere to their allocated
responsibilities. Co-operative working relationships should be fostered throughout.

Candidates will decide on criteria and evidence for identifying their own strengths and
weaknesses and evaluate their contribution to the group task.

General skill

Work with others in a group to analyse, plan and complete an activity.

Specific skills

♦ analyse the activity and identify the component tasks and roles which make up the activity
♦ agree allocation of responsibilities taking account of own strengths and weaknesses and those of others
♦ support co-operative working
♦ evaluate and draw a conclusion about own contribution to group activity, and justify this by referring to supporting evidence

Further information

The overall goal for the group activity should be clear. The activity should be capable of being broken into separate tasks which should not be obvious and which must be identified by the group.

The candidate must:
♦ with other group members, analyse the requirements of the activity
♦ identify own and group strengths, limitations and preferences and agree allocation of responsibilities, taking account of these
♦ with other group members, decide on procedures for carrying out the activity
♦ encourage co-operative working by anticipating the needs of others, keeping others informed of progress and contributing to group decisions
♦ evaluate own contribution to group activity, developing evaluation criteria and producing evidence

Candidates will identify their own individual and the group's collective strengths, weaknesses and preferences in relation to the activity, negotiate responsibilities taking account of this and adhere to their allocated responsibilities.

Candidates will provide information to and seek information from others as required, anticipating the needs of others and providing support accordingly. Co-operative working relationships should be fostered throughout.

Candidates will decide on criteria for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and should make an assessment of how they might have acted to improve overall group performance.

General skill

Work with others in a group to analyse, plan and complete a complex activity.

Specific skills

♦ analyse the activity by defining the goal and identifying the component tasks and roles which make up the activity, taking account of the size and expertise of the group
♦ negotiate roles and responsibilities with others, taking account of own strengths and weaknesses and those of colleagues
♦ negotiate working methods and rules for managing the group's work
♦ support co-operative working
♦ evaluate and draw conclusions about own contribution to group activity, and justify this by referring to supporting evidence

Further information

The candidate must:
♦ agree the nature and scope of the activity
♦ with other group members, analyse the requirements of the activity
♦ taking account of group strengths, limitations and preferences, negotiate roles and responsibilities
♦ negotiate working methods and rules for managing the group's work which are acceptable to colleagues and consistent with available resources
♦ support others, eg by offering encouragement, sharing resources, modifying behaviour to meet the needs of different situations, or dealing with disagreement sensitively
♦ evaluate and draw conclusions about own contribution to group activity, developing evaluation criteria and producing evidence

The general, overall goal for the group activity should be clear, but the goal will need to be defined exactly. The activity should be capable of being broken down into separate but not obvious tasks.

Candidates will identify their own individual and the group's collective strengths and weaknesses in relation to the task, negotiate and adhere to roles and responsibilities allocated.

Candidates will provide information to and seek information from others as required, will anticipate the needs of others and provide support accordingly. Co-operative working relationships should be fostered throughout.

Candidates will decide on criteria for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, and gather and present information on their own contribution to the task; and from this suggest a strategy for enhancing their future contribution to effective group working.