



Core Skills for the Future — Bulletin

Issue 7 — Summer 2008

Welcome!



Welcome to the seventh issue of the Core Skills for the Future Bulletin.

This Bulletin will outline our progress in the refresh of the Core Skills Framework and qualifications.

The Bulletin will also provide you with up to date information on other developments within the area of Core Skills.

We do hope you find the content both informative and interesting.



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Workplace Core Skills progress



The new Workplace Core Skills Units and support packs will be ready for first candidate entry in August 2008. The new Units and Support Packs retain the existing Workplace Core Skill format, which means stakeholders will be familiar with the look and feel of the Units.

Some minor changes have been made to the Core Skills Framework which, in turn, is reflected in the Units themselves. This

means that centres will have to update their assessment instruments to ensure that they meet the current standards. The Core Skills remain as:

- ◆ Working with Others
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information Communication Technology
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Problem Solving

Communication

Although the Framework for Communication hasn't changed, the content of the Units have been updated to reflect current thinking. Listening has now been included as an increased focus within Communication, giving slightly more emphasis to this important skill.

Problem Solving

There are no changes to the Framework in this area, however, the Units have been updated and refreshed to ensure currency. There is also increased exemplification which should help centres further develop this area.

Working with Others

The focus within Working with Others has changed to reflect the increasing need within organisations to employ staff who are able, not only to deal with the increasing complexity of tasks, but also with the complexity of interpersonal relationships within the work environment. The mandatory planning element has also been removed from Working with Others, as we know that not everyone within the working world has the option to plan their roles. It is anticipated that these changes will greater serve the needs of employers and will align with some of the softer skills being outlined in *Skills for Scotland: A lifelong learning strategy*.

Numeracy

The focus within the Core Skill of Numeracy has also changed to emphasise numerical problem solving in everyday situations. It is anticipated that by increasing the level of problem solving within Numeracy that individuals will be able to transfer the skills they learn, making the Core Skill more meaningful to their everyday working lives. There is also slightly more choice in the way graphical information is covered, making this part more relevant to what is done in the workplace.

Information Communication Technology

This area now has two components instead of the original one, these are:

- ◆ Accessing Information
- ◆ Providing/Creating Information

Both of these now place emphasis on the everyday skills people use with regard to Information Communication Technology. This includes wider areas such as mobile phone technology and information communication literacy, and being able to sensibly select and make sense of electronic information. There is also an increased focus on ICT security. The Units can help people focus less on being familiar with a wide range of packages and more on using one or two which best fit the needs of the workplace.

So what do you have to do?

The current Core Skills Units have now entered their completion period which means that Awarding Bodies and centres should be aware that the last date that candidates can be registered for the current Core Skills Units is 31 December 2008.

After 31 December 2008 candidates will then have a three year period to complete their current Core Skills qualification, so the last date centres will be able to provide results for certification of the current Units will be July 2011.

Centres who wish to start using the new Core Skills Units can do so from 1 August 2008. All new Unit codes will be provided by SQA Accreditation at the time of entry.

If you have any questions relating to the Workplace Core Skills please contact core.skills@sqa.org.uk or amanda.gray@sqa.org.uk.

Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills

This guidance has recently been updated and is currently in final draft form — it provides an overarching guide to assessing Workplace Core Skills and is free to download from our SQA Academy website.

www.sqaacademy.com/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=4240



Core Skills Qualification development

Progress to date



Core Skills: New Arrangements from August 2008

The Core Skill Framework and associated qualifications are now ready for first candidate entry in August 2008. The current Core Skills Units have now entered their completion period, which means centres that are already approved to offer the current Core Skills can continue to deliver and provide results for the current Core Skills Units until 31 July 2010.

Existing centres which are currently approved to deliver Core Skills will automatically be approved for the new Core Skills Units from August 2008. The first certification run for the new Core Skills Units will be in October 2008.

Changes to candidates' Core Skill profile

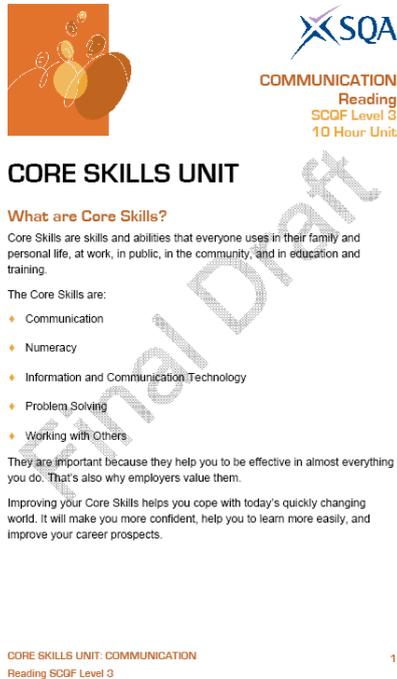
The Core Skills Framework has also undergone a refresh, which means that some of the components within it have changed. These component changes were necessary to ensure that the Framework remained current.

Candidates with a Core Skill Profile will notice that if they get a new or replacement certificate after October 2008, the component titles on their Core Skill Profile may have changed. This is because the new certification Arrangements will give 'new for old' status in terms of Core Skills. Candidates do not need to be reassessed as any new certificates will be updated automatically to reflect the new components.

The new Core Skills Framework, Units and Assessment Support Packs can be downloaded now from SQA Academy and will be available on SQA's main website (www.sqa.org.uk) from August 2008.

See details on how to access SQA Academy later in this Bulletin.

The new look National Qualification Unit and Assessment packs



The Units themselves are very different in style to the current NQ Units. Firstly they are written for the learner in plain English to promote ownership of their learning. They have different headings and their assessment processes are extremely flexible, which we hope will encourage alternative assessment practices across all of our sectors.

We have also included an Assessment Support Pack for every Unit, which includes exemplification and replaces the traditional NABS. These Assessment Support Packs are written for the tutor and offer further guidance on assessment. The Assessment Support Packs are available on SQA Academy until August, when they will be placed on the secure area of SQA's website.

We have, where possible, ensured that delivery and assessment can be as flexible and creative as need be. The Units, which emphasise the need to contextualise and personalise learning, will offer learners the opportunity to translate their Core Skill achievement into their everyday lives and build on it as they progress down the route of lifelong learning.

To help with programme planning and updating systems, you can download the NQ Core Skill Unit codes from the NQ Catalogue or use the tables highlighted below.

National Qualification Core Skills Units

New codes for candidate entry August 2008

Title	SCQF Level	Unit Code	Superclass
Communication			
Communication	SCQF2 (40hr)	F3GB 08	KB
Communication: Listening	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GM 08	HB
Communication: Reading	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GN 08	KB
Communication: Speaking	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GP 08	KB
Communication: Writing	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GR 08	KB
Communication	SCQF3 (40hr)	F3GB 09	KB
Communication: Listening	SCQF3 (10hr)	F3GM 09	HB
Communication: Reading	SCQF3 (10hr)	F3GN 09	KB
Communication: Speaking	SCQF3 (10hr)	F3GP 09	KB
Communication: Writing	SCQF3 (10hr)	F3GR 09	KB
Communication	SCQF4 (40hr)	F3GB 10	KB
Communication	SCQF5 (40hr)	F3GB 11	KB
Communication	SCQF6 (40hr)	F3GB 12	KB
Numeracy			
Numeracy	SCQF2 (40hr)	F3GF 08	RB
Numeracy: Measuring	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GL 08	HD
Numeracy: Money	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GH 08	HD
Numeracy: Time	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GJ 08	HD
Numeracy: UGI	SCQF2 (10hr)	F3GG 08	RB

Numeracy	SCQF3 (40hr)	F3GF 09	RB
Numeracy: Measuring	SCQF3 (10hr)	F3GL 09	HD
Numeracy: Calculation	SCQF3 (20hr)	F3GK 09	HD
Numeracy: UGI	SCQF3 (10hr)	F3GG 09	RB
Numeracy	SCQF4 (40hr)	F3GF 10	RB
Numeracy	SCQF5 (40hr)	F3GF 11	RB
Numeracy	SCQF6 (40hr)	F3GF 12	RB
Information Communication Technology			
Information Communication Technology	SCQF2 (40hr)	F3GC 08	CD
Information Communication Technology	SCQF3 (40hr)	F3GC 09	CD
Information Communication Technology	SCQF4 (40hr)	F3GC 10	CD
Information Communication Technology	SCQF5 (40hr)	F3GC 11	CD
Information Communication Technology	SCQF6 (40hr)	F3GC 12	CD
Problem Solving			
Problem Solving	SCQF2 (40hr)	F3GD 08	HB
Problem Solving	SCQF3 (40hr)	F3GD 09	HB
Problem Solving	SCQF4 (40hr)	F3GD 10	HB
Problem Solving	SCQF5 (40hr)	F3GD 11	HB
Problem Solving	SCQF6 (40hr)	F3GD 12	HB
Working with Others			
Working with Others	SCQF2 (40hr)	F3GE 08	HB
Working with Others	SCQF3 (40hr)	F3GE 09	HB
Working with Others	SCQF4 (40hr)	F3GE 10	HB
Working with Others	SCQF5 (40hr)	F3GE 11	HB
Working with Others	SCQF6 (40hr)	F3GE 12	HB

Smaller 'chunks' of learning at SCQF level 2 and 3 in Communication and Numeracy



The smaller Units are as follows:

Communication (SCQF level 2 & 3)

- ◆ Reading
- ◆ Writing
- ◆ Speaking
- ◆ Listening

Numeracy (SCQF level 2)

- ◆ Measuring
- ◆ Time
- ◆ Money
- ◆ Using graphical information

Numeracy (level 3)

- ◆ Measuring
- ◆ Using numbers
- ◆ Using Graphical Information

These smaller Units allow learners to build up to the full Core Skill, whilst being certificated on a Unit by Unit basis. The Units themselves are written for the learner in plain English and guidance on the level of support tutors can give is indicated within the Units themselves. Each Unit also has an Assessment Support Pack which offers further guidance to the tutor. These Units are available for first candidate entry on 1 August 2008. The smaller Units are costed at the same price as a standard Unit, if taken and certificated individually. However, centres can still register learners for the full Core Skill and deliver it as a stand alone Unit.

Numeracy learner sheets at SCQF level 2



We have also created learner sheets at SCQF level 2 for Numeracy. These sheets are designed to encourage learners to think about the areas of their lives where they currently use numeracy and help them to make the connection between numeracy in everyday situations and learning numeracy. The learner sheets are available for download from SQA Academy and will be posted on the main SQA Core Skills webpages from August 2008. An audio version will also be made available.

Our continued support to you



We are hosting sectoral networks in October 2008 to give tutors the opportunity to share practice in their areas. It is hoped that centres who have started to use the new Units will be able to offer support to those who are about to embark on a new session design.

The dates for the events are as follows:

- ◆ Monday 20 October 2008 — Workplace Core Skills — Glasgow
- ◆ Wednesday 22 October 2008 — Colleges and Other Adult Learning Providers — Glasgow
- ◆ Friday 24 October 2008 — Schools — Glasgow

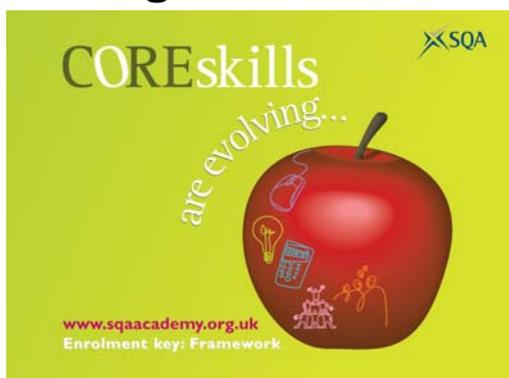
To book a place on the events above please e-mail core.skills@sqa.org.uk

SQA Academy will continue to be our engagement tool and will remain open for all comments during the implementation phase — log on and join the discussion!

Our Understanding Standards website is also being updated over the summer months, as resource allows, to reflect the changes to the Units and also the Core Skills Framework — this site will continue to grow as more and more exemplification is offered to us by our centres. Let's share good practice and maintain assessment standards.

www.understandingstandards.com

Putting Core Skills on your wallpaper



Why not spread the word? This Core Skills wallpaper is available for you to download from SQA Academy and use within your own centres. What better way to let everyone know that Core Skills are changing.

www.sqaacademy.org.uk



More Choices, More Chances

Chris Sutherland has recently joined SQA as the Project Manager supporting 'More Choices More Chances.'

SQA has an important role to play within 'More Choices, More Chances' to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for learners to access a wide range of skills, knowledge, abilities and

experiences through our framework of qualifications.

Chris has been engaging with various sectors to ensure that the work undertaken involves as many key partners and stakeholders as possible, to ensure that there is the foundation for an effective yet flexible partnership approach.

SQA recognises that to successfully increase choice and opportunity for some of the more vulnerable and disengaged learners, experiences must be both purposeful and meaningful, whilst offering a system that both nurtures and supports sustainable learning. This aligns well with the refreshed Core Skills Units and assessment principles, in particular with the smaller Units in Communication and Numeracy at SCQF levels 2 and 3 which can offer a 'spiky profile' of accredited learning for some of the learners who want 'More Choices, More Chances'.

The next phase of SQA activities in support of 'More Choices, More Chances' will see continued communication and engagement with stakeholders, increased support for centres in their delivery of SQA qualifications within the context of 'More Choices, More Chances', and further partnership working to explore how we can further extend the reach of our current qualifications across a number of sectors.



SQA Academy — Core Skills

SQA Academy is a webspace for stakeholders to make comment on some of the current developments within SQA. Core Skills for the Future has its own area within SQA Academy which has, to date, allowed stakeholders to view the refreshed Core Skills Framework and the first two phases of Core Skills qualification development. Now that we are the implementation phase of the qualification development it is important that you log on and have a look at the final materials.

To gain access to SQA Academy, follow the instructions on screen and use the enrolment key: Framework.

So, what should you do now?

All centres who deliver National Qualifications Core Skills

Look at SQA Academy and have a think about how you would implement the new Units, and start planning your new sessions.

For all centres who deliver Workplace Core Skills

The Units are about to be accredited ready for first candidate entry in August. Please go to SQA Academy where you will find the Units, Assessment Packs and also additional guidance materials.

www.sqaacademy.org.uk

Other developments

SFEU English and Communication Network



SQA were delighted to be invited to attend the SFEU English and Communication Network on 13 June 2008 in Stirling, to discuss the new Core Skills Units and assessment approaches. The feedback from the day was helpful and we welcome their partnership as we move forward with the implementation of the new Core Skills Units.

Scottish Learning Festival

SQA Core Skills are delighted to be involved with this year's Scottish Learning Festival and will be presenting at the following two workshop sessions, we do hope you'll come along and introduce yourself!

Title for Session: Four Schools and a College: Curriculum for Excellence, Action Research Project

This year's Scottish Learning Festival provides a unique opportunity to hear from practitioners about their experiences in taking forward thinking in the Curriculum for Excellence through five linked Action Research projects. The five teacher/lecturer led projects, situated in Anniesland College; Dollar Academy; St Luke's High School, Barrhead; St Margaret's Academy, Livingston; and Trinity Academy, Edinburgh, have given the opportunity to explore approaches to learning, assessment and qualifications across the curriculum. Three of the five have Core Skills as the main development vehicle.

Title for the session: Adult Literacies: Understanding Standards of the new PDA ITALL

Find out about our new interactive resource for those involved in supporting adult literacies learning. You will see, hear and hopefully feel what the standards and assessment issues mean for practitioners as we take you through the new support project, now on SQA's Understanding Standards website.

Further information is available on the Scottish Learning Festival website (www.ltscotland.org.uk/slf/index.asp).

Core Skills Bulletin, Autumn Edition



The next Core Skills for the Future Bulletin will be issued in September 2008. We would be delighted to highlight the work you are doing in your centre around Core Skills delivery. If you would like your activities to be part of our Core Skills Bulletin, please contact gill.mann@sqa.org.uk.