



Exemplification of Signposting of Core Skills in HN courses

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Introduction

This exemplar has been designed to assist colleges with the delivery of ‘signposted’ Core Skills. It will help you manage and deliver Core Skills that are signposted, and gives clear examples of the resource, teaching and learning methods that are currently being used in colleges.

SQA would like to thank Jo Bradshaw of SFEU for her work on this project, thanks also to all the colleges who provided their examples for use in this documentation.

Background

There are now new design principles for Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas. The design principles that are relevant to Core Skills are:

- ◆ HNCs and HNDs shall incorporate opportunities for candidates to develop Core Skills.
- ◆ HNCs and HNDs should clearly include opportunities for candidates to develop Core Skills to levels required by the occupations or progression pathways the HNCs and HNDs support. This would normally mean five Core Skills should be developed in every HNC and HND.

There are two ways to develop Core Skills. One of these is by ‘signposting’. Our publication *Guidance on Core Skills: Using the design principles for Higher National Certificates and Diplomas* (October 2005) (p6) defines signposting as:

‘... the identification of opportunities for Core Skills development that lie outwith those that can be summatively assessed and certificated. This allows for more opportunities to develop Core Skills through teaching and learning, and highlights them for the people delivering and managing the Units.’

The other way to develop Core Skills is by ‘embedding’. When a Core Skill is embedded, it will be automatically certificated provided that the candidate follows the assessment instructions given. An example of ‘embedding’ is in the Unit DH21 34 *Working within a Project Team*, where Communication and Working with Others are integral parts of the Unit.

This report identifies good examples of delivering of ‘signposted’ Core Skills. It gives examples of resources and teaching and learning approaches being used in various colleges.

1 Introductory case study: Aberdeen College

This case study sets the pattern for our discussion of delivering signposted Core Skills. This is the only case study to focus on one institution — those that follow consider particular aspects of delivering signposted Core Skills.

Delivery of Core Skills in Aberdeen College:

- ◆ All courses have to be internally approved, with documentation submitted to an approval group; each course has to specify where all five Core Skills will be developed and to what level.
- ◆ All staff have to complete a lesson plan indicating which Core Skills will be developed during the lesson; this cannot be left blank, though not all five Core Skills are expected to be developed in each class (see figure 1, overleaf).
- ◆ There are resources to develop a student's Core Skills to the entry level required (if necessary) for any course through the 'Student Development Centre'. The college recognises that students who do not have the necessary Core Skills levels on entry may struggle to achieve the course award.

The following examples are taken from the HNC/HND in Administration and Information Technology course.

Resources for students

Students have a course handbook, which contains all the information they need to complete the course successfully. The handbook highlights the importance of Core Skills in a number of ways and places. Examples of all of these are given in the pages that follow:

- 1 General information on Core Skills (figure 2.1)
- 2 Core Skills entry and exit levels for the course, together with information about where some of the Core Skills are embedded (figure 2.2)
- 3 A table showing where Core Skills are developed and which elements (figure 2.3)
- 4 A page making reference to 'Skills Achievement' (Personal development, Core skills, Vocational skills, Employability skills, Citizenship), informing students of other skills being developed during the course (figure 2.4)
- 5 A table to be completed during the course, which lists the skills mentioned on the previous page (item 4 in this list), together with columns to be completed headed — 'Specific contributory Units', 'Teaching and learning approaches to specifically develop these skills', 'Specific activities and events Eg visits, competitions'. This table is completed by students with some guidance from tutors, during the course of the year (figure 2.5)

Exemplification of Signposting of Core Skills in HN courses

The Curriculum Manager for AIT takes responsibility for tracking where Core Skills are developed in each Unit. He also liaises with the Curriculum Manager of any servicing area, to establish the opportunities for development of Core Skills in these Units too.

At fortnightly team meetings, learning and teaching approaches are discussed. These meetings may include the development of Core Skills in subject areas. Core Skills development is always discussed at annual programme planning meetings, at which members of servicing sections are present.



Lesson Plan

Unit Title:

Unit Number:

Week No:

Lesson Aim/s:

Lesson Objectives:

Core Skills: Communication () Numeracy () Problem Solving () Information Technology () Working with Others ()

TIMING	STAGES	TUTOR METHODOLOGY/ ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES/AIDS	ASSESSMENT FORMATIVE/SUMMATIVE

figure 1: Aberdeen College lesson plan

Aberdeen College: General information on Core Skills

National Qualification Core Skills are included in most college courses and in some courses they are part of the mandatory requirements of the course. The Core Skills Units are:

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

Core Skills Units are all available from SCQF 2 to SCQF 6. They may be taught and assessed as discrete stand-alone Units, or as part of other subjects you are studying in your college course. The Core Skills you achieve will be listed on a Core Skills Profile, which you will receive with your SQA certificate.

At the start of your course of study your tutor will help you to identify the Core Skills you require to achieve your qualification. If you already have the Core Skills required (this will be shown on your Core Skills Profile which lists prior attainment), you will be offered appropriate alternatives; either progression with Core Skills or alternative vocational Units. If you do not have a Core Skills Profile and are unsure about your level in Core Skills then staff in the Student Development Centre can help you to find this out.

Core Skills are broad transferable skills. These skills are useful both in college and the workplace. In college, they provide a base for lifelong learning and personal development. In the workplace, qualities developed in Core Skill Units, including effective communication, using initiative to solve problems, and being able to work well in a team, are all highly valued by employers.

figure 2.1

Aberdeen College: Core Skills entry and exit levels

The award of HNC Administration and Information Technology has been designed using the New Design Principles and therefore the importance of the Core Skills has been recognised and these are developed throughout the award.

It should be noted that although there are no Mandatory Entry and Exit levels the recommended Core Skill Profile would be:

Core Skill	Recommended Entry Level	Recommended Exit Level
Communication	SCQF 5	SCQF 6
Information Technology	SCQF 5	SCQF 6
Problem Solving	SCQF 5	SCQF 6
Working with Others	SCQF 4	SCQF 6
Numeracy	SCQF 4	SCQF 5

Embedded Core Skills

The Core Skill of Communication (Higher) is embedded in the Unit — Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication.

The Core Skill of Information Technology (Higher) is embedded in the following Units:

- ◆ Outcome 1 and 3 — IT in Business: Database
- ◆ Outcome 2 — Office Technologies

The Core Skill of Problem Solving (Higher) is embedded in the Unit — Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness.

figure 2.2

Aberdeen College: Development of Core Skills	
Information on the attainment and development of Core Skills, within individual Units of the mandatory Units in the award is given below.	
Unit	Core Skills Developed
Office Administration	Communication (Reading)
	Communication (Writing)
	Problem Solving (Analyse)
	Problem Solving (Plan and Organise)
	Problem Solving (Review and Evaluate)
Office Technologies (Outcome 2 of Core Skill IT is embedded in this Unit)	Information Technology (Use an IT System)
	Information Technology (Use Software)
	Communication (Reading)
	Communication (Writing)
	Problem Solving (Analyse)
IT in Business — Databases (Outcomes 1 and 3 of Core Skill IT are embedded in this Unit)	Problem Solving (Plan and Organise)
	Problem Solving (Review and Evaluate)
	Information Technology (Use an IT System)
	Information Technology (Use Software)
	Information Technology (Search for information from unseen source)
IT in Business — Word Processing and Presentation Applications	Information Technology (Carry Out Searches)
	Communication (Reading)
	Communication (Writing)
	Problem Solving (Analyse)
	Problem Solving (Plan and Organise)
IT in Business — Spreadsheets	Problem Solving (Review and Evaluate)
	Information Technology (Use an IT System)
	Information Technology (Use Software)
	Communication (Reading)
	Communication (Writing)
	Problem Solving (Analyse)
	Problem Solving (Plan and Organise)
	Problem Solving (Review and Evaluate)
	Information Technology (Use an IT System)
	Information Technology (Use Software)

figure 2.3

Aberdeen College: Skills Achievement page

The course you are enrolled on is designed to support you in achieving a range of valuable skills while you work towards gaining your qualification. These skills will assist you with progression to successful further study and/or employment. Many of these skills will allow you to develop and sustain a successful life and career by helping you to adapt to changes in the workplace and the economy over the coming years. The skills are those which we use throughout our lives, and which we all constantly build on and practise.

The skills are in the following areas:

- ◆ Personal development
- ◆ Core skills
- ◆ Vocational skills
- ◆ Employability skills
- ◆ Citizenship

You will be supported to develop these skills throughout the course of your studies by a variety of approaches. In some cases the specific content of the Units you are studying will help develop the skills. In the other cases the teaching and learning approaches will help you acquire the skills as you study the Unit. There may also be opportunities to participate in extra curricular activities, events, and competitions that will provide the opportunity to acquire the skills.

The table below highlights some of the important Units, teaching and learning approaches and additional activities that will develop your skills.

figure 2.4

Aberdeen College: table to be completed during course

Skill	Specific contributory Units	Teaching and learning approaches to specifically develop these skills	Specific activities and events Eg visits, competitions
<p>Personal development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ self-confidence and self-esteem ◆ self-awareness/self-knowledge ◆ positive attitude to learning ◆ self-directed learning and other learning approaches ◆ analysis and critical thinking (if appropriate) 			
<p>Core Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ communication ◆ numeracy ◆ information technology ◆ working with others ◆ problem solving 			
<p>Vocational Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ competency and proficiency in the subject/vocational area 			
<p>Employability Skills</p> <p>Examples may include all of the above and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ planning and organising skills ◆ customer handling skills (where appropriate) ◆ self-management ◆ creativity 			
<p>Citizenship</p> <p>Skills developed through participation in programmes and wider aspects of college life (see the individual learning plan)</p>			

figure 2.5

2 Further examples of good practice

The examples that follow pick up on various aspects of delivery highlighted in the Aberdeen case study. We will now look at these aspects:

Resources for students:

- ◆ induction booklets
- ◆ documentation used during a course
- ◆ end-of-Unit records
- ◆ use of specific programmes to aid Core Skills development
- ◆ use of SQA documentation

Teaching and learning approaches:

- ◆ course team meetings
- ◆ guidance sessions
- ◆ lesson planning
- ◆ class contact
- ◆ use of specific Units for developing Core Skills

2.1 Resources for students

The following resources are all valuable for raising students' awareness about how they are developing Core Skills as they progress through the award. However, experience shows that merely giving students documentation is not sufficient in itself — most students need to have aspects of the documentation highlighted verbally, too, on a regular basis. This would apply particularly to 'signposting' of Core Skills — there is a danger that staff may believe that since the award framework documentation indicates where Core Skills will be developed, nothing further needs to be done. Using these resources successfully depends on staff referring to the development of Core Skills at every available opportunity.

Induction booklets

The optimum time for the development of Core Skills to be introduced to students is at the induction session. Practically all colleges produce an induction booklet that tells students all they need to know about the course. This booklet should refer to the development of Core Skills, indicating the entry and exit profile for the course and explaining what this means. The best examples of induction booklets also include some sort of table showing where each Core Skill is being developed in the different Units.

Example one

Induction booklet previously described in the case study at Aberdeen College (HN AIT) see the Aberdeen Case Study.

Example two

North Glasgow College has incorporated Blackboard in its delivery of HNC Computing. In this Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is course documentation, which includes an induction booklet. This has details of:

- (a) The entry and exit profile recommended for the course (figure 3.1).
- (b) Details of the number of credits in the course together with a statement about where embedded Core Skills can be found in Units (figure 3.2).
- (c) A table of mandatory Units indicating which Core Skill (or component) is developed and to which level (figure 3.3).

Core Skills entry and exit profiles		
The recommended entry and exit Core Skill Profiles for this award are defined in the table below.		
CORE SKILL	ENTRY PROFILE	EXIT PROFILE
Communication		
Oral Communication	SCQF 5	SCQF 6
Written Communication	SCQF 5	SCQF 6
Numeracy		
Using Graphical Information	SCQF 5	SCQF 5
Using Number	SCQF 5	SCQF 5
Information Technology	SCQF 5	SCQF 6
Problem Solving		
Critical Thinking	SCQF 5	SCQF 5*
Planning and Organising	SCQF 5	SCQF 5*
Reviewing and Evaluating	SCQF 5	SCQF 5*
Working with Others	SCQF 5	SCQF 5*

figure 3.1

G7GL 15 HNC Computing — conditions of award

A total of 12 credits must be achieved, comprising 96 SCOTCAT points, to gain an HNC and this must incorporate 48 SCOTCAT points at SCQF level 7. An HNC will normally include one Graded Unit of 8 SCOTCAT points at SCQF level 7.

To gain an HNC Computing, it is necessary to gain a total of 6 credits from the mandatory Units (Table A).

Embedded Core Skills or elements are shown below Unit titles in brackets.

figure 3.2

Table A: Mandatory Units			
UNIT TITLE		CREDIT VALUE	SCQF LEVEL
Computer Architecture 1 (Numeracy @ SCQF 5)	DH2T 34	1	7
Information Technology: Applications Software 1 (IT @ SCQF 6)	D75X 34	1	7
Computing: Planning (CT, PO @ SCQF 6 tbc*)	DH35 34	1	7
Computer Operating Systems 1	DH33 34	1	7
Working within a Project Team (Comm, WwO @ SCQF 6)	DH21 34	1	7
HNC Computing Graded Unit – Examination	DH36 34	1	7

Acronyms used:

IT Information Technology
 CT Critical Thinking (component of Problem Solving)
 PO Planning and Organising (component of Problem Solving)
 Comm Communication (both oral and written)
 WwO Working with Others
 tbc* to be confirmed

figure 3.3

Documentation used during a course

Other documentation can be introduced early in the course to help students with planning.

In its HNC Computing course, Lauder College has introduced a ‘yearly planner’, which shows the timescale for Units on a weekly basis, with the Core Skill (or component) being developed during the Unit (see figure 4).

Wk.	Beginning	ITAS1 H Using Info Tech	COS1	Planning H Critical Thinking	SD:EDP	SUTDOS
1	19/09/2005					
2	26/09/2005	Extra session				
3	03/10/2005	Extra session	O2 practical (HN1)	A1 due in (HN1)		
4	10/10/2005	Extra session		A1 due in (HN2)		
5	24/10/2005	Extra session				
6	31/10/2005			A2 due in		
7	07/11/2005					
8	14/11/2005	FULL completed assessment must be in this week		Final (upgraded) submission		
9	21/11/2005	Check marking drawer for final amendments or corrections				

figure 4

End-of-unit records

Two colleges provide examples of Unit record sheets, which are given to students with completed, marked assessments.

Clydebank College

In the assessment form, used in the HNC/HND Business course by Clydebank College, there are spaces for staff to indicate which of the five Core Skills have been developed (see Appendix 1).

Glasgow Metropolitan College

Glasgow Metropolitan College also provide a record sheet at the end-of-unit assessments. This sheet is of a more evaluative nature and puts the onus on the student to reflect on what they have learnt. Called 'On Track', it asks the student to indicate which Core Skills components have been developed during the Unit and what they need to improve in future ('What would you do differently, if you could do this Unit again?') (Appendix 2).

Use of specific programmes to aid Core Skills development

Two colleges (Central College and Clydebank College) have purchased rights to use Oracle Academy training in their HNC/HND Computing awards. This programme focuses on developing 'skills for the 21st century' (website: www.academy.oracle.com) and includes Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Job Interviewing (Oral Communication), group collaboration (Working with Others) and Numeracy. Students have to complete a project which is presented both orally and in written form.

Use of documents provided by SQA

The following colleges indicated that they use documentation (Information for candidates) provided by SQA, which are supplementary to the Unit descriptors:

Central College — HNC/HND AIT
Lauder College — HNC Computing
Perth College — HNC Computing
South Lanarkshire College — HNC Computing

These information sheets are given out usually at the first meeting of the class for a particular Unit. Whilst these are useful documents, it is important that students are made aware of the information about Core Skills contained in them and the significance of this information is highlighted.

2.2 Teaching and learning approaches

The resources for students we have discussed above are all useful in highlighting Core Skills development, but they will not, in themselves, have any impact if they are not regularly referred to and acted on by staff in course delivery. Staff also have to be aware of which Core Skills are being developed in which Units, and how they can effectively maintain a high profile of Core Skills development. This means that teaching and learning approaches are an important aspect of raising awareness of Core Skills.

Course team meetings

Regular course team meetings should be used to raise staff awareness of the importance of Core Skills development. If signposting and how it is done is a regular agenda item, staff can raise concerns about the best ways to do this effectively and efficiently and share good practice. This is particularly important where servicing staff are concerned. They should be encouraged to attend course team meetings, in order that there is a common approach to Core Skills development within the course.

Aberdeen College is a good example of regular course team meetings to discuss Core Skills development; staff from servicing sectors are asked to attend annual programme planning meetings.

At Perth College, staff delivering the AIT course discuss at team meetings how they can make Core Skills explicit in the delivery of different Units. One way they do this is by linking the Communication and IT Core Skills with the Office Administration Unit (DE1P 34). This involves linking the following outcomes in the different Units:

HN Unit	Outcomes	Linking to other HN Unit
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications (DE1L 34)	O1 Create a range of business documents	Communication: Analysing and Presentation of Complex Communication (DE3N 34) O2 — Produce complex written communication
IT in Business: Word Processing and Presentation Applications (DE1L 34)	O3 Presenting information using presentation software	Communication: Analysing and Presentation of Complex Communication (DE3N 34) O3 — Organise and participate in a formal meeting (oral component)
Office Administration (DE1P 34)	O1 Evaluate the effectiveness of business documents	Communication: Analysing and Presentation of Complex Communication (DE3N 34) O1 — Analyse complex written business documents

This shows where the development of Core Skills can be highlighted by teaching staff; there may be opportunities to use the IT and Communication Core Skills in other Units, and staff can point this out to students in the classroom.

Lesson planning

Aberdeen College uses a lesson-planning template which all staff complete for each of their classes, regardless of level. This form has a section where staff identify the Core Skills that will be developed in the lesson. It is not expected that all five Core Skills will be developed in each lesson. This approach means that staff awareness of the possible development of Core Skills is highly focused (see the Aberdeen Case Study).

Lesson planning is also used at Coatbridge College; these plans are currently being piloted at NQ level, with the possibility of using them at HN level in academic year 2006–07. Like the template used at Aberdeen, there is a section on Core Skills, which, in this case, is broken down into components (see Appendix 3). Coatbridge also has an evaluation form in which staff evaluate aspects of their teaching and learning, including ‘How well did I embed Core Skills into the lesson?’ (see Appendix 4). Both these forms help to raise staff awareness of where they can actively promote the development of Core Skills.

Guidance sessions

Several colleges indicated that guidance sessions are used to promote the development of Core Skills:

At Dundee College (HN Administration and Information Technology), the Core Skills of Problem Solving and Working with Others are discussed along with other ‘soft skills’. A form is completed over a 12-week period, in which students assess their own performance (see Appendix 5) on a 10-point scale. This self-evaluation is discussed with the guidance tutor.

Perth College uses the guidance session to link guidance to two other Units: Personal Enterprise Skills (DK2M 34) and Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness (DF4E 34). In guidance sessions, development of Core Skills and ‘soft skills’ are discussed and logged with students. An ‘away day’ is held at the beginning of the course where Working with Others and Problem Solving are highlighted through group activities. Course tutors continue to refer to these two Core Skills in other Units during the course, for example, Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness (DF4E 34).

Class contact

In both the Administration and Information Technology and the Business HN awards at Perth, staff have taken an integrated approach to three Units: *Personal Enterprise Skills* (DK2M 34), *Managing People and Organisations* (DE3D 34) and *Behavioural Skills for Business* (DE3L 35). These are delivered in a portfolio/skills-based approach entitled ‘Skills for Business’. As in the guidance sessions, staff and students develop and log Core and ‘soft’ skills. Students are made aware of the development of numeracy in Business Accounting and IT transferable skills in other Units.

In the Social Care course at Clydebank, specialist staff deliver the skills for oral presentation and highlight where these skills are transferable: to job interviews, group activity and university requirements. In the same course at Adam Smith College, a similar approach has been taken to two Units: *Sociology* and *Social Care*. The students have to complete oral presentations and written reports in these Units; staff highlight that the Core Skills being developed during the completion of these tasks are Communication, IT and Working with Others. They are given feedback on their performance and advice on how they can improve, where necessary.

In the HND Travel and Tourism award at Glasgow Metropolitan College, staff indicate how the skills of Communication, Numeracy and Problem Solving are developed in the *Air Travel* Unit (DKOG 34). There is more about this in the Glasgow Metropolitan College Case Study, which follows this section.

South Lanarkshire College has specialist tutors to deliver and assess the Communication component of *Working within a Project Team* (DH21 34) in the HNC Computing course. Specialist staff are used to deliver other Core Skills components in this Unit, discretely, but contextualised. It is emphasised to students which Core Skills they are developing in this Unit and others.

Also at South Lanarkshire, in the HNC/HND Business course, each member of staff delivering Units draws the students’ attention to Core Skills within the Units, and in the third teaching block all the information about Core Skills will be pulled together to help students prepare for the external examination. It should be noted that the Graded Unit (external examination), as well as drawing on the vocational Units, relies on students’ development of Core Skills (for example, Problem Solving and Communication — written) in order to achieve success.

3 Delivering signposted Core Skills in the classroom: three case studies

3.1 Glasgow Metropolitan College: HND Travel and Tourism

Travel and Tourism courses have been delivered at Glasgow Metropolitan College (formerly Glasgow College of Food Technology) for many years, so staff have a great deal of experience. They have also consciously raised students' awareness of Core Skills development for many years, both in NC and HN courses. This process starts at the induction session, where staff take the students through the Units they will be studying and, as well as the vocational content, they outline the Core Skills which will be developed.

In the past, students on HN courses questioned the need for such Units as HN Communication, and staff explained how developing Communication skills would help their progress in other Units. In the new HN awards, staff are aware of an even greater need to outline explicitly where Core Skills are being developed now there are fewer dedicated Core Skills Units in frameworks.

Below are some examples of the opportunities staff use to point out to students which Core Skills they are developing and how this will help them in other Units and/or in future employment.

International Tourist Destinations (DK07 33)

Students have to make presentations to their colleagues based on their research, thus enhancing their oral skills (which are necessary skills in employment in most areas of tourism). They also have to write business letters — this skill is also required in the Unit *Retail Travel Practice* (DJ9Y 34).

Retail Travel Practice (DJ9Y 34)

As well as writing business letters for this Unit, students have to develop Numeracy skills in calculating both the cost of travel packages and travel time (including time differences, for example). Numeracy skills are also required in the Unit *Air Travel: Reservations, Fares and Ticketing* (DK0G 34).

Practice Travel and Tourism Visit (DK01 34)

A project-based approach to this Unit enables students to develop all five Core Skills to a high level. Eight different tourist attractions have to be visited, and the staff have divided the students currently studying for the award (2005–2006) into four groups, so that each group has to arrange two visits. Working with Others is developed within the group in deciding where to go, how to manage the project, and how to direct the other students who will also be attending the attraction. These decisions also involve Problem Solving skills.

Researching possible venues involves IT skills, such as website searches and word processing, to produce information for the visits. The information has to be communicated to all those who will be visiting the venues, either in speech or writing.

Conclusion

In addition to ‘signposting’ to students where and how they are developing Core Skills, the course team also invites Core Skills lecturing staff to course board meetings, so that the Core Skills staff can contribute to identifying opportunities for developing Core Skills.

In this course, several Units have automatic certification of different Core Skills at different levels. However, staff are aware that merely relying on automatic certification will not raise awareness in the students that they are developing Core Skills, hence the constant reference to Core Skills development, and the application of these skills, during classes.

3.2 Edinburgh’s Telford College: HNC Pharmacy

This course is for day-release students working as pharmacy technicians in hospitals in the area. Edinburgh’s Telford College is the only college offering this course. The aim of the course is to enable pharmacy technicians to develop the skills required to become line managers. There are three vocational Units delivered by specialist lecturers working in the industry. The other Units, developing management skills, are delivered by the college staff. It is these Units which offer the best opportunities for the signposting of Core Skills.

Staff delivering the college-based Units inform students when they are developing Core Skills that are transferable in their line of work and to other Units.

The table below indicates:

- ◆ some of the range of skills perceived by the hospital employers as necessary in enabling students to become successful line managers in the pharmacy department
- ◆ Core Skills relating to these employment skills
- ◆ corresponding Units presenting opportunities to develop Core Skills

Exemplification of Signposting of Core Skills in HN courses

Workplace skills	Core Skills	HN Unit
Action planning (for team working)	Problem Solving (SCQF 6) Working with Others (SCQF 6)	Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness (D4FE 34); Working with People and Teams (A6GV 34)
Organising meetings	Communication (written and oral) (SCQF 6) IT (SCQF 5)	Outcome 3 – Presenting Complex Communication for Vocational Purposes (D5P3 34)
Leading meetings: presenting information orally and written	Communication (oral and written)	Presenting Complex Communication for Vocational Purposes(D5P3 34); Business Writing Skills (D7LN 34)
Developing teams	Working with Others (SCQF 6)	Working with People and Teams (A6GC 34)
Decision making	Problem Solving (SCQF 6) Working with Others (SCQF 6)	Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness (D4FE 34); Working with People and Teams (A6GV 34)
Costing projects	Numeracy (SCQF 6)	Graded Unit (work-based project); Research Skills (DH4G 34)
Developing the individual	Problem Solving (SCQF 6) Working with Others (SCQF 6)	Developing the Individual within the Team (DF45 34)
Designing questionnaires	Problem Solving (SCQF 6) Communication (SCQF 6) Numeracy (SCQF 6)	Graded Unit; Business Writing Skills (D7LN 34)

The Graded Unit is a work-based project and gives students the opportunity to develop all five Core Skills.

3.3 Oatridge College: HND Agriculture

Oatridge College's HND Agriculture course attracts students wishing to access a range of progression opportunities such as higher education, employment in farming, sales (eg farming equipment, animal feed, fertilisers), departments of agriculture, and food processing industries. This course was quoted as an example of good practice in the college's 2003 HMIe report, which made reference to business management case studies used in the final year of the course. The report commented that the case studies covered a range of Core Skills.

Staff delivering the course frequently refer to the Core Skills being developed in Units and how these can be transferred to other Units and to employment.

Livestock Nutrition (D7TY 04)

For this Unit, students use IT skills to access information from websites about, for example, nutrition statistics, and to set up databases to record the information for easy access. They also have to develop Numeracy skills for making calculations.

Planning Budgeting and Control (DF7F 04); Financial Business Analysis (DF7E 04)

The Numeracy skills developed in *Livestock Nutrition* can then be applied here. IT skills are also required for producing spread sheets and databases.

Report-writing skills are required for most of the Units in the course, which offers opportunities to develop Communication skills to SCQF level 6.

All five Core Skills are developed in the farm business management case study that students complete in their final year. For this Unit, students have to:

- ◆ Visit a farm as a group to find out how the farm is run (Working with Others).
- ◆ Find out information about the uses to which the farmer puts the land (Oral and Written Communication skills — working out what questions to ask; asking them and recording the answers).
- ◆ After the visit, find out information regarding, for example, amounts of seed, fertilisers, and animal feed required, subject to the farmer's business needs, by accessing online information (IT research skills).
- ◆ Estimate costs and profitability (Numeracy skills).
- ◆ Write a final report on the business (Written Communication skills) and give a presentation on it (Oral Communication skills).

Throughout this project, students also have to develop and constantly use Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising, and Evaluation skills (all outcomes of Problem Solving).

4 Future developments

In the course of researching this project, several colleges indicated that they were in the process of developing approaches to signposting of Core Skills:

Cumbernauld College

In the Social Care course, staff have introduced a course audit and a learning plan, which staff will use to map Core Skills covered in all Units delivered at HNC and NC levels. This is ongoing development.

Dumfries and Galloway

The Personal Development Planning Unit will be introduced into the HN AIT and Accounting awards in session 2006–07.

Central College of Commerce

The college has now formulated its Core Skills policy and has introduced a range of documentation highlighting the development of Core Skills. The college is currently (2005–06) auditing all its courses, so that a mapping exercise can be carried out. Staff development sessions on raising awareness of Core Skills took place in August 2005. On completion of the audit of courses and mapping exercise, further staff development will take place to enable staff to raise awareness amongst students about when and where they are developing Core Skills, and how these skills can be transferred.

Glasgow College of Nautical Studies

This college has just created a new department; Learner Services. They are in the process of updating their procedures and policies. The Core Skills Co-ordinator has looked at each HN award and put together a course Core Skills report which is submitted to the Course Leader. There are plans to implement staff development on the signposting of Core Skills in HN awards.

5 Recommendations

- 1 Those colleges which have recently begun looking at procedures, or are introducing course audits, should be contacted at the end of the academic session 2005–06, or the beginning of 2006–07, to find out what progress they have made.
- 2 Contact should be made with all colleges mentioned in this report at the end of academic year 2005–06 to ascertain the progress students have made in developing Core Skills. It would be useful to gather together examples of documentation described in this report, completed by students, bearing in mind data protection and confidentiality. It may be possible to make up exemplars using completed documents.
- 3 At the end of academic year 2005–06, or the beginning of 2006–07, workshops should be delivered where good practice could be shared and issues arising from signposting of Core Skills could be discussed.

Appendix 1: Clydebank College Centre for Enterprise: Assessment Comment Form

Unit title Session

Unit no. Term

Lecturer Moderation Group

Outcome/PC

Date for submission Date submitted

Student name

Course Class

Core Skills covered				
Comm	Numeracy	IT	Working with others	Problem solving
<input type="text"/>				

Merit Pass Remediate

Comments

Lecturer

Internal moderation

Pass Merit Remediate

Comments

Internal Moderator Date

Appendix 2: Glasgow Metropolitan College: On Track: Student evaluation of Learning gained on completion of a Unit

Student Name:

CONFIDENTIALITY: This file is held by course organiser as a record of work. Only yourself, your course organiser, subject tutor, and occasionally college auditors, will view this file.

Course Code:

Subject Title:

Course Period Code:

Date:

1. Having completed this Unit, please give a brief summary of what you have learned in terms of vocational (specialist) skills relevant to you course of study (for example, use of a particular software application or programming language, a particular design or drawing skill, etc).

2. List the Core (generic) Skills you have acquired by completing this Unit:

Written Communication

- writing reports essays articles letters e-mails project or client briefs
 invoices
 other _____

Oral Communication

- making a presentation contributing to a meeting discussion project critique
 making phone calls speaking to clients/customers
 other _____

Information Technology

- word processing spreadsheets database (eg create folders, create databases, networking, etc. This will depend on the course you are on.)

Exemplification of Signposting of Core Skills in HN courses

Numeracy

- using number skills
- creating an invoice
- estimating
- creating a chart or graph
- using statistical information
- other _____

3. What aspects of this Unit did you enjoy most? Why?

4. Which aspects of this Unit did you find difficulty with? Why?

5. What would you do differently, if you could do this Unit again?

Date:

Student Signature

Tutor Signature

Appendix 3: Lesson Plan



Unit Title		Unit Number	
Lesson Title		Duration	
Lesson Objective		Lesson Number	

Time	Teaching Activity	Student Activity

Resources Required

Data Projector		Subject specific (Specialist)	
Smartboard			
OHP			
Whiteboard			
Chalkboard			
IT Suite			
Internet access			
Laptop			
TV and VCR			
Course notes			

Core Skills Development

Communication	Oral Communication (listening and talking)	
	Written Communication (reading and writing)	
Numeracy	Using Graphical Information (graphs, tables, diagrams)	
	Using Numbers (for measurement and calculations)	
Problem Solving	Critical Thinking (thinking about all aspects of a situation or problem)	
	Planning and Organising (making decisions about what to do, arrangements and plans to carry them out)	
	Reviewing and Evaluating (looking back at what has been done, measuring how successful the plan was and what improvements could be made in the future)	
Information Technology	Using Information Technology (using PCs to perform tasks – internet access, software applications)	
Working with Others	Participating in activities and tasks with other people	

Independent Learning Activities

Web Addresses Supporting Unit	
Other Independent Activities	

Appendix 4: Evaluation of learning and teaching



How well did I achieve my aims and objectives?

How good was my planning, classroom management, etc?

How well did I embed Core Skills into the lesson?

Action points (Any changes I would make to future lessons)

Other

Exemplification of Signposting of Core Skills in HN courses

Appendix 5: Dundee College: Students' self-assessment form

NAME _____ CLASS _____ SESSION _____

DISTANCE TRAVELLED Scale – 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest

SCALE	OVERALL CONFIDENCE			MAKING FRIENDS			WORKING WITH OTHERS					
10												
9												
8												
7												
6												
5												
4												
3												
2												
1												
WEEK	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12

SCALE	ABILITY TO ASK QUESTIONS			TAKING RESPONSIBILITY			MANAGING TIME EFFECTIVELY					
10												
9												
8												
7												
6												
5												
4												
3												
2												
1												
WEEK	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12

Exemplification of Signposting of Core Skills in HN courses

SCALE	MEET DEADLINES			GIVING HELP			RECEIVING HELP					
10												
9												
8												
7												
6												
5												
4												
3												
2												
1												
WEEK	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12

SCALE	PROBLEM SOLVING			RELIABILITY			RECEIVING FEEDBACK					
10												
9												
8												
7												
6												
5												
4												
3												
2												
1												
WEEK	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12	1	4	8	12