

SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) — level 2 (SCQF level 5)

F99E 04: Improving Productivity Using IT 2

4 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5

Description: This is the ability to plan, evaluate and improve procedures involving the use of IT tools and systems to improve the productivity and efficiency of tasks and activities.

Outcome	Skills and Techniques	Knowledge and Understanding
On completion of this Unit the candidate should be able to:		
1 Plan, select and use appropriate IT systems and software for different purposes.	1 Plan how to carry out tasks using IT to achieve the required purpose and Outcome. 2 Select and use IT systems and software applications to complete planned tasks and produce effective Outcomes.	1 Describe the purpose for using IT . 2 Describe the methods, skills and resources required to complete the task successfully. 3 Describe any factors that may affect the task . 4 Describe how the purpose and Outcomes have been met by the chosen IT systems and software applications . 5 Describe any legal or local guidelines or constraints that may apply to the task or activity.
2 Review and adapt the ongoing use of IT tools and systems to make sure that activities are successful.	1 Review ongoing use of IT tools and techniques and change the approach as needed. 2 Review Outcomes to make sure they match requirements and are fit for purpose.	1 Describe whether the IT tools selected were appropriate for the task and purpose. 2 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of final work. 3 Describe ways to make further improvements to work .
3 Develop and test solutions to improve the ongoing use of IT tools and systems.	1 Develop solutions to improve own productivity in using IT. 2 Test solutions to ensure that they work as intended.	1 Review the benefits and drawbacks of IT tools and systems used, in terms of productivity and efficiency 2 Describe ways to improve productivity and efficiency.

Note: The **emboldened** items are exemplified in the Support Notes.

Evidence Requirements

Completion of a portfolio (manual, electronic or combination) to cover all of the Skills and Techniques and Knowledge and Understanding points stated above. The evidence generated should adhere to the Assessment Strategy for this award and encompass a range of evidence types.

NB: It is possible to achieve this Unit by Accreditation of Prior Achievement (APA), however, the relevant evidence must be referenced within the portfolio.

General information

This Unit equates to NOS (National Occupational Standards for IT Users 2009) IPU: Improving Productivity Using IT level 2. It has a stated number of SCQF credit points = 4 at SCQF level 5.

Support Notes

Summary

A SCQF level 5 (ITQ level 2) user can plan and review their use of predefined or commonly used IT tools for activities that are at times non-routine or unfamiliar. As a result of reviewing their work, they will be able to devise solutions to use IT tools to improve productivity. Any aspect that is unfamiliar will require support and advice from other people.

An activity will typically be 'non-routine or unfamiliar' because:

- ◆ the task or context is likely to require some preparation, clarification or research (to separate the components and to identify what factors need to be considered, for example, time available, audience needs, accessibility of source, types of content, message and meaning) before an approach can be planned
- ◆ the techniques required will involve a number of steps and at times be non-routine or unfamiliar

Examples of context which illustrate typical activities which might be undertaken by users:

- ◆ an improvement may be creating spreadsheets to automate price list updates in a sales or accounts business context using office software

Examples of content are given separately for highlighted text, where explanatory notes are required on terminology in the Outcomes, and do not form part of the standards. Such examples are not meant to form a prescriptive list for the purposes of assessment but rather to amplify and interpret the generic terms used in the performance criteria in the light of current usage of ICT systems and software. These examples are subject to change as new tools and techniques become commonplace and older ones drift out of use.

The examples given below are indicative of the learning content and are not intended to form a prescriptive list for the purpose of assessment.

Outcome 1

Purposes for using IT: Who and what the information is for, when it must be finished, what information needs to be included, where it will be used (on screen, sent to others, printed).

Plan task: What information sources are needed, how they will be found and evaluated, what application software will be used, what skills and resources are needed to complete the task successfully, requirements for content, structure and layout, *priorities*.

Factors that may affect the task: Access to information, steps that need to be taken in advance, availability of time, budget and resources; audience need.

Reasons for choosing IT: Time, convenience, cost; benefits of IT or manual methods of preparing, processing and presenting the same information; own views on convenience and effectiveness at meeting needs, quality, accuracy; how IT can make tasks easier than other methods, streamline business processes, increase productivity, *any difficulties people have in using IT*.

Legal or local guidelines or constraints: May include data protection, copyright, software licensing; security; organisational house-style or brand guidelines.

Outcome 2

Review use of IT tools: Gather information to help make judgements, analyse information about whether the IT tools and techniques are appropriate to the task and intended Outcome.

IT tools selection: Time taken, convenience, cost, quality, accuracy, *range of facilities, versatility, transferability of information into other formats, speed of Internet connection, time constraints of downloading large files*.

Strengths and weaknesses of final work: Format, layout, accuracy, clarity for audience, *structure, style, quality*.

Improvements to work: Correct mistakes, avoid affecting other people's work, *more efficient and effective ways of doing things*, learning new techniques.

Review Outcomes: Evaluate the quality of the information used, produce drafts, review against initial plans, check with intended audience, *effect of own mistakes on others*.

Outcome 3

Ways to improve productivity and efficiency: Save time, save money, streamline work processes, increase output, improve quality of outputs; cost of solution.

Develop solutions: Set up short cuts, customise interface, record macros.

Guidance on examples of evidence

In order to reflect the standards of competence expected by employers, all evidence for the ITQ mandatory Unit must be naturally occurring from IT activities undertaken for a specific and real purpose.

The setting in which candidates are assessed should be a realistic working environment (see Criteria for realistic working environments — Annex A.1.1 of SVQ for IT Users (ITQ) Assessment Strategy, Scotland, page 10).

The evidence for the assessment of the mandatory Unit that candidates provide will come from tasks or activities. The end user will typically specify the purpose and general content for the tasks. In many situations, the candidate's employer or client will specify the end product.

Valid evidence can also arise from:

- ◆ the search for employment (eg CVs, job applications and emails to potential employers)
- ◆ social activities (eg club membership databases, posters and websites)
- ◆ enterprise activities (eg business plans, budgets and marketing materials)
- ◆ voluntary activities (eg cash flows, programmes and newsletters)
- ◆ learning and studying subjects other than IT (eg internet research for a geography assignments, reports/dissertations and presentations)

It is for the assessor to ensure that the activities were for a real purpose. Assessors may wish to consider items such as product evidence, candidate statements, candidate checklists and/or knowledge tests in relation to these tasks/activities.

Typical examples of evidence for Outcome 1

Given a specific task, the candidate would be expected to produce an individual justified plan of action which clearly sets out the procedures and choices to be made and followed to achieve the required purpose and Outcome, taking into account legal or local guidelines or constraints.

Typical examples of evidence for Outcome 2

Given a task to a given specification, the candidate would be expected to demonstrate that they have complied with the task specification(s) in its completion, through the efficient use of IT, and if necessary, change the tools used and the approach adopted, to ensure that requirements have been met and the finished task/product is fit for purpose.

Typical examples of evidence for Outcome 3

The candidates would be expected to demonstrate their ability to adapt their methodology and ongoing use of IT tools, developing solutions to given tasks which improve their own productivity in the use of IT and test their developed solution to ensure that it meets the intended purpose(s).

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements