

**-SQA-SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**-Unit Number-**            **6660057**  
**-Superclass-**            **BA**  
**-Title-**                    **AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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**-DESCRIPTION-**

**GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT:** Analysing and explaining public relations' services and techniques, and legal and ethical controls which affect the PR industries.

**OUTCOMES**

1. analyse public relations services.
2. analyse the application of a range of public relations media and techniques.
3. explain the legal and ethical controls affecting the public relations industries;
4. produce written communication material for internal public relations.

**CREDIT VALUE:**    2 HN Credits

**ACCESS STATEMENT:** Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, although students would normally be expected to hold National Certificate modules or other relevant qualifications.

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For further information contact: Committee and Administration Unit, SQA, Hanover House, 24 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 7NQ.

Additional copies of this unit may be purchased from SQA (Sales and Despatch section). At the time of publication, the cost is £1.50 (minimum order (£5.00)).

**NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE; UNIT SPECIFICATION**

**STATEMENT OF STANDARDS**

**UNIT NUMBER:** 6660057

**UNIT TITLE:** AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

**OUTCOME**

1. ANALYSE PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- (a) The distinctive role of public relations in the marketing mix is clearly defined.
- (b) Public relations operations are identified accurately.
- (c) The place of public relations in the overall management strategy is explained correctly.
- (d) The roles of public relations department and a public relations consultancy are differentiated clearly.
- (e) The financial aspects of public relations services are clearly described.

**RANGE STATEMENT**

Marketing mix: public relations; advertising; marketing.

Public relations operations: internal; external.

Financial aspects of public relations: costs; budgetary constraints.

**EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS**

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies all the performance criteria and the range statement. Reference should be made to a particular organisation in PCs (b), (c) and (d).

**OUTCOME**

2. ANALYSE THE APPLICATION OF A RANGE OF PR MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- (a) A knowledge of available media is fully demonstrated.
- (b) The effectiveness of available media is evaluated.
- (c) The selection of appropriate techniques is justified.

**RANGE STATEMENT**

Available media: Television; radio; press release; leaflet; flyer; advertisements; exhibitions.

Appropriate techniques: market segmentation; strategic planning; timing; formal personal contact informal personal contact.

**EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS**

Written and/or oral evidence satisfying the performance criteria and the range statement.

**OUTCOME**

3. EXPLAIN THE LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONTROLS AFFECTING THE PUBLIC RELATIONS INDUSTRIES

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- (a) The purpose of the current Codes of Practice is identified.
- (b) The current Codes of Practice relating to public relations are evaluated.
- (c) Significant clauses of the current Codes of Practice are identified.
- (d) The implications of current Codes of Practice on public relations are analysed.
- (e) The impact of constraints is clearly explained.
- (f) The legislation relating to public relations activities is explained accurately.

**RANGE STATEMENT**

Current Codes of Practice: Institute of Public Relations; Public Relations Consultants' Associations; European Centre of Public Relations (CERP).

Constraints: statutory; self-imposed.

**EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS**

Written and/or oral evidence which satisfies the performance criteria and the range statement.

**OUTCOME**

- 4. PRODUCE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION MATERIAL FOR INTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- (a) The formats chosen for internal public relations material are appropriate for the defined purpose.
- (b) The language tone and register are used appropriately for the defined purpose.
- (c) The content of the written communication material is accurate and appropriate for the defined purpose.
- (d) The communication materials for internal use meet the objectives of the organisation effectively.

**RANGE STATEMENT**

The range for this outcome is fully expressed within the performance criteria.

**EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS**

Written evidence that all performance criteria have been achieved for two different types of internal public relations' materials.

**MERIT** A pass with merit may be awarded to a candidate who demonstrates superior performance in all of the following:

- (a) analysing public relations services;
- (b) analysing the application of a range of public relations media and techniques;
- (c) explaining the legal and ethical controls affecting the public relations industries.

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## **ASSESSMENT**

In order to achieve this unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the performance criteria for each outcome within the range specified. Details of these requirements are given for each outcome. The assessment instruments used should follow the general guidance offered by the SQA assessment model and an integrative approach to assessment is encouraged. (See references at the end of support notes).

Accurate records should be made of the assessment instruments used showing how evidence is generated for each outcome and giving marking schemes and/or checklists, etc. Records of candidates' achievements should be kept. These records will be available for external verification.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Proposals to modify outcomes, range statements or agreed assessment arrangements should be discussed in the first place with the external verifier.

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## HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

### SUPPORT NOTES

**UNIT NUMBER:** 6660057

**UNIT TITLE:** AN INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

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

**NOTIONAL DESIGN LENGTH:** SQA allocates a notional design length to a unit on the basis of time estimated for achievement of the stated standards by a candidate whose starting point is as described in the access statement. The notional design length for this unit is 80 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

**PURPOSE** The purpose of this unit is to enable the candidate to achieve understanding of what Public Relations Skills are, how they differ from those of advertising and Marketing in both essence and application and which legal and ethical controls operate in Public Relations.

**CONTENT/CONTEXT** The following information offers clarification of the context in which the outcomes and the performance criteria are to be achieved.

The underpinning knowledge required for this unit can be delivered in a theoretical way but the main emphasis should be on the analysis of Public Relations services and their application through, for example, the use of case studies. It will be necessary for the candidate to be familiar with the current legislation affecting Public Relations and to be able to relate such legislation to PR practice.

Corresponding to outcomes:

1. Candidates should explore the role of Public Relations in relation to Advertising and Marketing. They should be familiar with the current definitions of Public Relations and the theories behind PR operations and procedures. The place of PR in overall management strategy should be explored with particular emphasis on budgetary implications with in-house and consultancy PR featuring.

Once candidates have grasped the basics of Public Relations, case studies can be used for analysis. Candidates should be encouraged to find their own examples from the national or local press and discussion should feature in class work. It may also be possible to involve guest speakers from industry and/or organise the PR visit to a local company.

2. The range of media available to the PR practitioner should be fully explored, taking into consideration current developments. Planning the use of various media should be considered fully and the use of certain media in specific circumstances examined. While the importance of using the right medium in the right circumstances cannot be overstressed, the candidates should not lose sight of the overall management strategies behind the uses of the various media.
3. In all circumstances the PR practitioner must be aware of the legal and ethical constraints under which he/she operates. Here formal teaching will have a place though it is possible to teach this outcome by checking current PR practice against the codes identified in the Range Statement. Self-imposed constraints are more difficult for the candidate to understand but again broadcast and print media can provide exemplification.
4. It is recommended that this outcome is delivered from an internal marketing perspective and PR materials are devised for internal communications within a particular organisation (real or simulated).

In outcome 2 the candidate will have analysed a range of communication media and in this outcome he/she should consider which would be the most appropriate for use within an organisation. Practice in writing materials should be given and a folio of work built up. It may be useful to consider a particular organisation (real or simulated) and devise PR materials to fit the given situation.

**APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE** Formative work in this unit should lead naturally to summative assessment.

In outcome 1 case studies could be used for assessment purposes with candidates being required to determine the nature of Public Relations as opposed to Advertising and Marketing and to identify how these disciplines interlink. An extended response on PR as part of the overall management strategy would be appropriate, linked to the use of in-house and/or consultancy PR and the financial implications of their use.

For outcome 2 again the case study in which the candidate would be able to analyse the effectiveness of using the various media would seem to be the most appropriate for assessment purposes. The candidate would be expected to identify the various media being used and provide considered comment on their use.

In outcome 3 the candidate should be able to refer to the various codes of practice affecting PR and relate these to specific examples of Public Relations Skills in practice. It should be possible to find source of material for assessment in broadcast and print media.

For outcome 4 Candidates should select two items from their portfolios for assessment purposes.

**ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES** Centres may use Instruments of Assessment which are considered to be the most appropriate.

**REFERENCES**

1. Guide to unit writing.
2. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
3. Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures.
4. For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list.

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