

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Communication: Practical Skills (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HP4A 47

Superclass: KB

Publication date: August 2017

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit *Communication: Practical Skills* sits at SCQF level 7 and is designed to develop skills in analysing, summarising, evaluating and producing complex written information in a practical vocational context. It also develops skills in presenting and responding to complex oral information in a practical vocational context.

The Unit enhances skills for learning, life and work and there is a particular emphasis on employability.

The Unit can be taken as part of a Group Award or as a stand-alone Unit for the purposes of continued professional development. Work undertaken for the Unit will be in a context appropriate to the learner's Group Award or relevant to an individual's vocational area/discipline.

The Unit embeds and provides automatic certification of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Summarise and evaluate written information on a complex vocational issue.
- 2 Produce written information in a prescribed format on a complex vocational issue.
- 3 Contribute to a formal oral interaction on a complex vocational issue.

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Credit points and level

1 SQA Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners should have competence in Communication skills to at least SCQF level 6 or equivalent. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one of the following:

F3GB 12 *Communication (Core Skill)*, SCQF level 6
FA1W 12 *Communication (NQ)*, SCQF level 6
DE1K 33 *Workplace Communication in English*, SCQF level 6

IELTS 6.0

Appropriate work experience

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill Communication at SCQF level 6

Core Skill component None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of the Unit Specifications for this Course.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes. If this Unit is delivered as a stand-alone Unit, it should be developed in a context to suit the learner's vocational needs and career pathway.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Unit specification: statement of standards

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

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Summarise and evaluate written information on a complex vocational issue.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Types, purposes and readership of written communication on vocational issues
- ◆ Actively reading and critically responding to written information on a complex vocational issue
- ◆ Conventions of formal written communication
- ◆ Impact of format, structure and layout on communication
- ◆ Impact of language and register in vocational documents
- ◆ The purposes and effectiveness of graphic communication
- ◆ Skimming, reviewing and note taking
- ◆ Skills of extracting key information and supporting detail from written information on complex vocational issues
- ◆ Skills in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of written communication on vocational issues

Outcome 2

Produce written information in a prescribed format on a complex vocational issue.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Types, purposes and readership of written documents on complex vocational issues
- ◆ Selecting and analysing information from a range of relevant sources
- ◆ Collating key complex information and ideas
- ◆ Producing documents on complex vocational issues
- ◆ Conventions of structure, format and layout in vocational documents
- ◆ Conventions of language and register in vocational documents
- ◆ Conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar
- ◆ Uses and effects of graphic communication
- ◆ Methods of referencing sources
- ◆ Reviewing, revising and redrafting vocational documents

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Outcome 3

Contribute to a formal oral interaction on a complex vocational issue.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Sourcing, evaluating and selecting complex information
- ◆ Planning and preparing materials to support oral communication
- ◆ Presenting all essential information
- ◆ Using a structure appropriate to purpose and context
- ◆ Using language and register appropriate to purpose and audience
- ◆ Using appropriate non-verbal communication
- ◆ Applying analytical and problem-solving skills
- ◆ Applying listening skills effectively to progress interaction
- ◆ Producing formal written records of oral interactions

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Outcome 1

The learner will provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and Skills by showing that he/she can:

- ◆ summarise written information on a complex vocational issue.
- ◆ evaluate written information on a complex vocational issue.

One text concerned with the presentation and analysis of information on a complex vocational issue will be presented to the learner for summarising and evaluating.

Firstly, the learner will critically engage with the text, identifying, extracting and summarising key information.

The summary should be such that it:

- ◆ demonstrates in-depth understanding of information, ideas and supporting detail.
- ◆ expresses key information concisely and coherently in the learner's own words.

Secondly, the learner will evaluate the text in approximately 350 words. The quality of the evaluation will be such that it:

- ◆ addresses the extent to which the text is appropriate to the intended reader and whether it meets its overall aims/purpose/objectives.
- ◆ assesses the accuracy, sufficiency and relevance of information presented.
- ◆ explains the strengths and any weaknesses in methods used to communicate information.
- ◆ justifies comment by detailed and relevant evidence from the text.

Evidence presented can be written or oral.

The assessment will be conducted in open-book conditions. The centre should ensure the authenticity of the learner's work.

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Outcome 2

The learner will provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and Skills by showing that he/she can produce written information in a prescribed format on a complex vocational issue.

The written information should amount to a minimum of 800 words, not including references, but may include associated or supplementary papers produced by the learner.

The quality of the document should be such that:

- ◆ information on a complex vocational issue is selected from relevant sources and communicated accurately.
- ◆ in-depth analysis of the issue is evident.
- ◆ the text is effectively supported by graphic communication as appropriate.
- ◆ structure is logical, coherent and effective.
- ◆ language and style are appropriate to context, purpose and readership.
- ◆ spelling, punctuation and grammar are consistently accurate.
- ◆ format and layout are appropriate to remit.
- ◆ reference sources are recorded as appropriate.

The assessment will be conducted in open-book conditions. The centre should ensure the authenticity of the learner's work.

Outcome 3

The learner will provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and Skills by showing that he/she can plan and deliver an input of at least five minutes to a formal oral communication involving analysis and decision making on a complex vocational issue.

The quality of the input should be such that:

- ◆ information presented is complex, accurate and relevant to purpose and audience.
- ◆ ideas are presented clearly and coherently.
- ◆ structure is appropriate to purpose.
- ◆ evidence is selected to support points made.
- ◆ support materials enhance communication.
- ◆ language, register and tone are used effectively and adapted to meet the needs of listeners.
- ◆ responses to the contributions of others progress interaction.
- ◆ non-verbal skills promote and progress communication.
- ◆ written records are to a professional standard.

The assessment will be conducted in open-book conditions.

Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Communication: Practical Skills (SCQF level 7)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit may be delivered as part of a Group Award but can also be taken as a stand-alone Unit, possibly for the purposes of continued professional development.

This Unit *Communication: Practical Skills* sits at SCQF level 7 and is designed to develop skills in analysing, summarising, evaluating and producing complex written information in a practical vocational context. It also develops skills in presenting and responding to complex oral information in a practical vocational context.

Work undertaken as part of a Group Award must relate to the subject area of that Group Award. Content/context will vary according to the vocational discipline but the focus should always be on communication for vocational purposes.

If the Unit is delivered as a stand-alone Unit, then it must also be contextualised to suit the needs of a learner's vocational area or to suit future work/employment/career progression or pathways. Again, the focus of the Unit should be on communication for vocational purposes.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit is likely to be a core part of an SQA Advanced Group Award and should be delivered as flexibly as is practical to reflect the identified needs of learners. Induction to the Unit should encourage the learner to review and reflect on his/her current communication skills to identify areas of strength and weakness, with a view to developing a personal development plan. The tutor could review with learners the practical skills needed to communicate the purpose and relevance of, for example, an idea, process or technical design. Current vocational communication practice should be analysed and taken into account when drawing up the development plan. This will enhance awareness of relevant employability skills and also the expected standard.

Outcomes may be approached discretely, in any order, or oral and written tasks may be combined thematically to allow a holistic approach to the development of relevant vocational communication skills. If practical, integration of work with written or oral assignments for other parts of the Group Award programme should ensure that learning is relevant to the learner's needs and aspirations. If learners are part-time, in employment, or the Unit is delivered on a stand-alone basis, negotiation of content and delivery around workplace/employment/career pathway needs will be required.

The tutor should provide learners with guidance materials that provide:

- ◆ Reference sources for the development of relevant oral, written, and non-verbal communication skills.

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- ◆ Examples of varied types of vocational communication in different formats/house-styles to reflect current and emerging trends.

Formative work to practise and develop skills and the allowance of time for the draft and redraft of materials will be important.

All learning and teaching should be learner-centred, participative, interactive and practical. The use of new technologies should be encouraged for researching, communicating and presenting information. This will assist in the development of a range of different skills, for example:

- ◆ Research
- ◆ Judicious selection of sources
- ◆ Evaluating sources
- ◆ Note taking
- ◆ ICT
- ◆ Working independently/autonomously and collaboratively
- ◆ Learning and study skills/skills in self-directed study
- ◆ Time management

Learners should be encouraged to become more responsible for their own learning. In using learner-centred approaches, tutors will favour a facilitative, rather than a didactic approach. Such an approach can be pursued either face-to-face with learners or as part of online support, involving appropriate tutor interventions as required to help with the skills development. Passive learning, rote learning, passive reproduction of content and transfer of knowledge is not acceptable. Learners must be encouraged, and provided with opportunities, to take an active role in their own learning.

Co-operative working with other learners to gather and exchange information, as typical of workplace practice, should be encouraged as far as is practical. Some activities should be pre-planned and learners briefed in advance. In any group work, the tutor should ensure the rotation of roles and responsibilities. Learners should be encouraged and supported, in a secure environment, to try out different roles and learning techniques, and to challenge their 'comfort zone'. This practice will reflect the realities of the workplace where employees are expected to be flexible and versatile. Such an approach to learning and teaching will strengthen skills in:

- ◆ Negotiation
- ◆ Collaboration
- ◆ Team work/interaction with others
- ◆ Recognising the interdependence of team members
- ◆ Initiative
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Resilience
- ◆ Peer respect
- ◆ Responsibility/sense of ownership
- ◆ Personal effectiveness
- ◆ Problem solving

It is important that learners understand the real dynamics of team working/collaborative working, are aware of the differences that exist between team members as a positive factor, and treat one another with professionalism and respect.

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Assessment of learners will normally take place after appropriate learning and skills development. It is likely that this will be towards the end of Unit delivery. Planning, preparation and record keeping are important aspects of the assessment process. Introductory work should therefore take account of vocational practice in terms of notes, briefing papers, visual aids, PowerPoint, formal/informal minutes, as appropriate to vocational context. Planning and support notes should be retained to encourage reflective self-evaluation and as an aid to learning from feedback and responding to it in a positive manner.

Some work may be undertaken outside the centre but conditions should be in place to ensure the authenticity of all evidence submitted. The problems and penalties associated with plagiarism should be explained and discussed at the start of the delivery of the Unit.

Materials supplied to the learners should be in an accessible format (Equality Act 2010).

This Unit certifies learners at SCQF level 7. The learner must be working towards and finally produce communication which meets the Evidence Requirements for the Unit. This evidence will also clearly reflect the level descriptors at SCQF level 7. The SCQF level descriptors can be found following the link below:

<http://scqf.org.uk/>

For learners who use English as a second language and may find the demands of this Unit challenging, it is recommended that additional time be provided for language development. This could be through additional supported learning and teaching or through the delivery of Unit DE1K 33 *Workplace Communication in English*, a single credit, 40 hour, SCQF level 6 Unit which is included within the optional section of many SQA Advanced Group Award frameworks. This Unit would need to be delivered early in the delivery of the Group Award to allow the learner to progress and achieve HP4A 47 *Communication: Practical Skills* at SCQF level 7.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Assessment approaches should be sufficiently flexible to allow for adaptation to the needs and situations of the learners and their vocational discipline. A thematic approach could look at issues such as, for example, health and safety, sustainable development or enterprise opportunities. An extended case study or project could provide a context for integrating Outcomes. For example, Outcome 1 assessment could involve extended reading of one or more reports, papers or articles on current technical issues directly relevant to a written document prepared for Outcome 2.

There may be opportunities for learners to explore innovative design ideas, products or services. Group discussion during formative preparation would enhance knowledge and develop essential interpersonal and problem solving skills. For summative assessment purposes, learners should summarise and evaluate one text individually, and record individual responses in writing or orally, using their own words. Further research on aspects of the same topic could be carried out to inform a range of proposals presented and discussed in a meeting (Outcome 3). Alternatively, individual presentations (Outcome 3) could be supported by a written report presenting key

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information, supporting detail and conclusions/solutions or recommendations (Outcome 2). Graphic and pictorial information to support both written and oral communication, and the use of technology for researching, communicating and producing effective text and presentations should reflect current professional practice.

There may be the potential for some integration with assessment tasks for other Units requiring the production of one or more written documents and/or oral communication. In such a situation it is critical that learners are not disadvantaged by over-assessment, and that they are made fully aware of the need to achieve all the evidence for all Units involved. If learners have not been able to demonstrate competence in formal assessments, assessors could consider, at the end of the year, written and oral communications produced during coursework, where there may be naturally occurring evidence of developed skills.

Providing formal, detailed feedback to learners is good practice and will be particularly valuable for those who need to be re-assessed on any Outcome. Precise, supportive comments should be related to the Evidence Requirements. Retention of draft work, notes of any interventions made, tracking records, emails or log records can be a valuable aspect of quality assurance, indicate progress and provide helpful information for the Internal and External Verification process.

Outcome 1 — Summarise and evaluate written information on a complex vocational issue

An appropriate length of text is likely to be between 800–1,500 words. A contextualised text, with content, format and language relevant to vocational purposes should be used. Graphics such as pictures, diagrams, tables or charts may support or enhance communication.

The text could be from a textbook, worksheet or website providing background knowledge for other subjects or it could be a model for the type of report or investigation to be produced in Outcome 2. The learner should survey and skim content, identify key points and supporting detail and extract information in a way that clearly demonstrates understanding. A summary could be produced in response to structured questions and might take the form of notes, bullet points or a report. Oral responses, which may be particularly appropriate for some learners, should be scribed or recorded. Assessors are reminded that written communication is not being assessed in this task.

Evaluation should examine the effectiveness of the text in terms of meeting the needs of intended readers and purpose; these may be self-evident or could be identified for learners. Accuracy, sufficiency and/or objectivity of content should be taken into account and should be considered in terms of relevance to the reader's needs. Learners could comment on good practice in the use of format, structure, layout and language and/or suggest approaches that could enhance communication. In order to support responses, detailed, specific reference to the text is required. Evaluation responses are likely to be approximately 350 words in length.

Outcome 2 — Produce written information in a prescribed format on a complex vocational issue

The task of the learner is to present written information in an accurate, coherent format relevant to vocational context. The brief should therefore draw on a practical situation, for example, review of and recommendations for equipment, design, analysis of health and safety issues, or proposals for sustainable development. Evidence Requirements may be met by successful completion of, for example, a technical report, design specification, marketing proposal or research paper.

Before writing commences, there should be full discussion of the purpose and intended readership to ensure that the document is appropriate in style and format. While the topic or theme will be complex, the language used need not be so, although complex technical language relevant to the vocational context may feature. In the case of a Health and Safety report,

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language would be straightforward and direct, though content would be detailed. The document should follow standard conventions and the remit might include a structure and headings. The text read and evaluated in Outcome 1 might form a model for content, structure and style. Graphic materials, such as pictures, charts, tables or diagrams, may be incorporated to support and enhance the text; it should be clear when these are the original work of the learner. The word count can include any associated or supplementary papers produced by the learner. These could be in the form of, for example, annotated graphics, charts, survey results. Sources of information used to substantiate writing should be recorded but lists of references cannot be included in the word count. Theory, legislation, policy and professional standards/competences should be linked to practice as appropriate.

Although use of technology is not mandatory, learners should understand its importance in the effective sourcing, storing and presenting of information. Efficient use of dictionaries and/or appropriate software will support checks on accuracy in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

An important aspect of delivery will be the setting of precise remits. All documents should be structured effectively and presented to a professional standard. Planning and organising the process should involve the learner in effective time management to structure, revise and redraft written work. Deadlines should allow for evaluation and re-negotiation and should reflect professional working practice.

Although some written communication may be undertaken outside the centre, conditions should be in place to ensure the authenticity of all evidence submitted. Supervised production of some work, as well as the retention of drafts, outlines and planning or tracking documents signed by the learner, is recommended. The problems and penalties associated with plagiarism should be explained and discussed at the start of the programme. Tracking software may be useful.

Outcome 3 — Contribute to a formal oral interaction on a complex vocational issue

The Oral assessment task for Outcome 3 may be linked with the other Outcomes or with other parts of the Group Award programme where learners contribute to an oral event involving analysis and problem solving in a vocational context.

Evidence Requirements may be met by successful completion of, for example:

- ◆ Preparation for, and contribution to, a formal discussion or a meeting requiring analysis and technical problem solving.
- ◆ A presentation, including analysis, based on a research investigation, followed by responses to audience questions.
- ◆ Preparation for, and participation in, a group design proposal or marketing presentation, with in-depth responses to questions and discussion.

The time allocated to oral assessment should reflect the type of task and the numbers involved. Each learner must talk for a total of at least five minutes, though input need not be continuous. A meeting, discussion or presentation should be timed and managed accordingly. Tasks could be undertaken in a group or one-to-one situation, in person, by telephone, video-conferencing, webinar, and webcam or similar. Workplace performance may be recorded for assessment purposes.

If learners are undertaking a practical assignment, an individual or group oral presentation could focus on reporting and analysing information, drawing conclusions and making practical recommendations.

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If the task is a formal discussion or meeting, each learner would be expected to deal with a significant aspect of the interaction. Each individual could, for example, prepare information, brief others on the issue, propose solutions and then take questions. A group, in a real or simulated workshop setting, might prepare and propose different solutions to a technical problem, then discuss and agree appropriate action. In order to cover the Evidence Requirements effectively, a group should involve manageable numbers and consist of no more than eight people.

Certain types of interview might also form appropriate assessment tasks. For example, a learner might prepare for a real or simulated performance review or appraisal, or a job selection interview.

Written records will be appropriate to the task undertaken. For an oral presentation these could include planning notes, PowerPoint (or similar) slides and/or handouts. A written self-evaluation would also be good practice, possibly using a template provided by the centre. For group discussions and formal meetings, each participant should generate a set of action minutes or a written record of decisions suitable for distribution in the workplace. Interview papers could include an outline CV with identification of skills and abilities, strengths and weaknesses in relation to personal and career development, and self-evaluation notes completed post interview. Templates could be used to ensure that documents produced would be suitable for use in a workplace environment.

In all cases, the learner would have to demonstrate autonomy, control presentation of information, use appropriate register and language, and work to professional standards. Use of the full range of aids to enhance delivery, (presentation software, digital sound/video etc) could be anticipated.

Evidence to be retained for verification should include a detailed observation checklist with copies of any supporting materials and appropriate written records of activity. Assessor notes on the checklist should be detailed, comprehensive and matched to Knowledge and Skills. There should be some recording of oral work in order to provide examples of standards and to support Internal and External Verification procedures.

Records need not be complex — log entries, if detailed, could suffice — but should be formal enough for professional use and for wider distribution as appropriate.

For learners whose first language is not English, a discrete approach to assessment that considers each Outcome in turn and offers additional support throughout the year may be useful.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Communication

This Unit embeds all components of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6. The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Oral Communication — *Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic.*

Written Communication (Reading) — *Read, understand, and evaluate complex written communication.*

Written Communication (Writing) — *Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics.*

Problem Solving

This Unit provides opportunities for the development of all components of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6.

The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Critical Thinking — *Analyse a complex situation or issue.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Identify the factors involved in the situation or issue.
- ◆ Assess the relevance of these factors to the situation or issue.
- ◆ Provide and justify an approach to deal with the situation or issue.

Learners could be given a brief for written and/or oral reporting which involved consideration of various factors contributing to a technical problem and suggestions for a draft strategy to manage the problem.

Planning and Organising — *Plan, organise, and complete a complex task.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Develop a plan
- ◆ Identify and ensure you have the resources to carry out the plan
- ◆ Carry out the task

A plan and identification of necessary resources could precede an attempted solution.

Reviewing and Evaluating — *Review and evaluate a problem solving activity.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Evaluate the effectiveness of all stages of the problem solving strategy and assess or explain the relevance of the evidence.
- ◆ Draw conclusions and justify them with reference to the evidence.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the solution could be written up in the Conclusions/Recommendations section of a formal report or review.

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

This Unit provides opportunities for the development of all components of the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 6.

The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Accessing Information — *Use ICT independently to carry out complex searches across a range of tasks.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Use a range of ICT devices, observing security procedures
- ◆ Carry out complex searches for information
- ◆ Evaluate reliability of information

Research and sourcing information for a report or meeting/review/interview/presentation task could involve use of ICT which, although not mandatory, would reflect business practice.

Providing and Creating Information — *Use ICT independently to carry out a range of processing tasks.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Use a range of ICT devices, observing security procedures troubleshoot simple hardware or software problems
- ◆ Make selective use of ICT
- ◆ Evaluate information
- ◆ Present findings in an appropriate format

Effective use of ICT in presenting complex information in written reports and oral presentations is not mandatory but is likely to be routine. Accessing, using and recording and storing electronic data will develop the skills needed in workplace practice.

Working with Others

This Unit provides opportunities for the development of all components of the Core Skill of *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6.

The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Working Co-operatively with Others — *In complex interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Analyse own role and the roles that make up the activity and/or activities and the relationship between them.
- ◆ Organise own role to contribute effectively to the activity and/or activities, adapting own role as necessary.
- ◆ Negotiate working methods.
- ◆ Promote co-operative working with others, progress towards shared goal.
- ◆ Use interpersonal skills effectively.

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Co-operative activities to achieve a common goal will develop skills in, for example, negotiation, collaboration, team working, communication and interpersonal skills and personal effectiveness.

Reviewing Co-operative Contribution — *Review work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities.*

The specific skills for this component are:

- ◆ Evaluate overall co-operative working, considering own involvement and the involvement of others, referring to supporting evidence.
- ◆ Draw conclusions and justify them with reference to supporting evidence.
- ◆ Identify learning objectives based on the evaluation and make recommendations for future co-operative working.

Oral work, particularly when there is problem solving which involves proposing alternatives and decision making in a workshop environment, could support the development of self-reflective approaches to co-operative working. Feedback from the assessor at all stages of delivery will encourage review and self-evaluation.

The practical focus of this Unit is designed to encourage resourcefulness and enhance employability skills. Dependent on the range and nature of assignments, there could be opportunities also to develop knowledge and skills in Citizenship and Sustainability.

This Unit has the Core Skill of Communication embedded in it, so when candidates achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Communication at SCQF Level 6.

Essential Skills

As indicated earlier in the Support Notes, this Unit is designed to develop skills for the workplace and for career progression. Suggestions have been offered as to how these skills could be developed. Tutors should maximise opportunities to develop employability skills. The following list recaps on earlier guidance and also highlights other skills that have been identified by employers as being essential for the workplace. These are not listed in order of priority.

Communication	Planning and organising
Leadership and Management	Setting goals and making action plans
Interpersonal	Time management
Creativity	Working effectively to meet deadlines
Flexibility/ability to adapt to different situations and environments	Negotiating/persuading
ICT	Positive attitude to work
Team work/group work	Adopting professional standards and working practices
Working independently/autonomously/self-management	Paying attention to detail
Using initiative/being proactive	Work experience/simulation
Problem solving, presenting ideas and solutions, making decisions	Applying numeracy skills
Research and investigation	Developing an awareness of the global economy
Critically analysing and evaluating	Foreign language skills
	Knowledge of chosen job or career path

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Self-evaluating with a view to improving performance/identifying strengths and weaknesses and setting objectives for improvement

Developing an awareness of cultural sensitivities/international culture and awareness

Citizenship

Citizenship is the exercise of rights and responsibilities within communities at local, national and global levels. It is about making informed decisions, and taking thoughtful and responsible action, locally and globally.

Coverage of citizenship could include the following:

having concern for the environment and for others; being aware of rights and responsibilities; being aware of the democratic society; being outward-looking towards society; being able to recognise one's personal role in this context; and being aware of global issues and understanding one's responsibilities within these, and of acting responsibly.

Sustainability

There are three main interconnected strands to sustainable development. Each can be addressed in learning processes.

Social: This strand is about quality of life. Think about educational impacts in terms of citizenship, the ability of groups of people to work together, the impacts of cultural integration, or improving security through crime reduction.

Economic: This strand is about infrastructure. The costs and benefits of sustainability are becoming more prominent for all professions, with many groups now considering the impact of current and future environmental directives. Learners are going to be affected by changes in working practices as a consequence of the implementation of these directives.

Ecological: Animals and plants become endangered or extinct; pollution and emissions are changing the natural systems we all rely on for clean air, water and food. In this strand, the genetic resources, and the systems for food and timber production are considered side by side with metal ore sources, fresh water and clean air. Sustainability recognises that people, and all other living things, depend on these resources being maintained rather than depleted or destroyed.

It is important to recognise that these three strands are not independent of each other, but that they should be viewed as an integrated whole. What is critical to the concept of sustainability is the understanding that all aspects of our lives depend on everything else that exists on Earth: be it people, social systems, earth systems, living things or non-living things. What happens in one place at one time can affect what happens somewhere else immediately or in the future.

Opportunities should be sought within teaching and learning to engage with the principles of sustainable development. Some examples might include:

- ◆ Review buying policies: where materials come from, where they go (eco-friendly products; fair trade products; using sustainable materials; reducing energy and waste bills).
- ◆ Show an awareness of different alternatives for materials or services.

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- ◆ Consider working practices: use of electronic media to communicate rather than face- to- face meetings.
- ◆ Review working practices to ensure that they are environmentally sensitive; recycling, waste reduction; use of clean technologies.
- ◆ Review and evaluate current reports or projects which address issues of sustainability.
- ◆ Review strategies and recommendations from relevant professional bodies/review articles in current trade and professional journals.
- ◆ Look at current environmental legislation and directives.

Teaching, learning and assessment themselves can be used to provide evidence for sustainable development. Some work could be undertaken solely using electronic means. For example, electronic media could be used for discussion groups or dialogue between tutor and learner, and work could be submitted via electronic portfolios, wikis and blogs, etc.

Administrative information

Version	Description of change	Date

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our [Centre Feedback Form](#).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Communication: Practical Skills (SCQF level 7)

This summary explains what the Unit *Communication: Practical Skills* is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start the Unit and what you will need to do and achieve whilst undertaking the Unit. It also outlines other opportunities for further learning and employment.

Effective oral and written communication skills are essential to promote good relationships and effective practice in a working environment. This Unit will focus on the practical approaches needed for successful communication.

You will read critically documents that are relevant to your vocational area, examining not just the content, but the structure, layout and presentation of the texts in terms of their purpose and intended readership.

You will show you can summarise the main points of a written communication on a complex vocational issue, demonstrating both your understanding and your ability to identify and pick out key points and to evaluate the text.

You will go on to produce at least one formal written document. This will be the type of written communication that you might produce in a workplace, such as a report or proposal.

You will consider the types of oral communication that are essential in industry and business today. You will go on to plan and prepare your own oral contribution to a task involving a complex vocational issue, keeping formal records of the work undertaken. You will present information orally and interact with others formally. You will listen to others and work in co-operation to reach decisions and conclusions.

Assessment

Outcome 1 — Summarise and evaluate written information on a complex vocational issue — firstly you will summarise one text and secondly you will evaluate the text in approximately 350 words. The assessment will be conducted in open-book conditions.

Outcome 2 — Produce written information in a prescribed format on a complex vocational issue — you will produce written information to a minimum of 800 words, which will not include references, but may include associated or supplementary papers produced by yourself. The assessment will be conducted in open-book conditions.

Outcome 3 — Contribute to a formal oral interaction on a complex vocational issue — you will plan and deliver an input of at least five minutes to a formal oral communication involving analysis and decision making on a complex vocational issue. The assessment will be conducted in open-book conditions.

There will be an opportunity to be re-assessed if you do not achieve the Outcomes in the first instance.

Your work will be monitored to ensure the authenticity of all evidence submitted for assessment purposes.

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Core Skills

This Unit provides the following opportunities to develop Core Skills.

Communication

This Unit embeds all components of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6. You will be certificated for this Core Skill. The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Oral Communication — *Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic.*

Written Communication (Reading) — *Read, understand, and evaluate complex written communication.*

Written Communication (Writing) — *Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics.*

Problem Solving

This Unit provides opportunities for the development of all components of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6.

The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Critical Thinking — *Analyse a complex situation or issue.*

Planning and Organising — *Plan, organise, and complete a complex task.*

Reviewing and Evaluating — *Review and evaluate a problem solving activity.*

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

This Unit provides opportunities for the development of all components of the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 6.

The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Accessing Information — *Use ICT independently to carry out complex searches across a range of tasks.*

Providing and Creating Information — *Use ICT independently to carry out a range of processing tasks.*

Working with Others

This Unit provides opportunities for the development of all components of the Core Skill of *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6.

The general skills for this Core Skill are:

Working Co-operatively with Others — *In complex interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities.*

Reviewing Co-operative Contribution — *Review work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities.*

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Other Essential Skills

You will also be given opportunities to develop key employability skills, as well as develop an awareness and understanding of citizenship and sustainability.

Opportunities may be taken by tutors to develop some of the following employability skills.

Communication	Planning and organising
Leadership and Management	Setting goals and making action plans
Interpersonal	Time management
Creativity	Working effectively to meet deadlines
Flexibility/ability to adapt to different situations and environments	Negotiating/persuading
ICT	Positive attitude to work
Team work/group work	Adopting professional standards and working practices
Working independently/autonomously/self-management	Paying attention to detail
Using initiative/being proactive	Work experience/simulation
Problem solving, presenting ideas and solutions, making decisions	Applying numeracy skills
Research and investigation	Developing an awareness of the global economy
Critically analysing and evaluating	Developing an awareness of cultural sensitivities/international culture and awareness
Self-evaluating with a view to improving performance/identifying strengths and weaknesses and setting objectives for improvement	Foreign language skills
	Knowledge of chosen job or career path

The skills developed in this Unit are essential both to you as a learner and to you in your working life.

Progression from this Unit is into further education and training or employment.