

## **SQA Advanced Unit Specification**

### **General information for centres**

**Unit title:** Continuous Workforce Development (SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** HP77 47

**Superclass:** GE

**Publication date:** August 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### **Unit purpose**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide candidates with the knowledge and understanding of how organisations identify and implement continuous training and development of their employees. In particular, candidates will develop the ability to produce an organisational training strategy, design a training programme and training activities and plan an evaluation strategy for the training programme.

### **Outcomes**

On successful completion of the Unit, the candidate will be able to:

- 1 Research the concept of continuous employee development.
- 2 Produce a training and development strategy for an organisation.
- 3 Design a training programme for a specific organisational purpose.
- 4 Plan the evaluation of the training programme.

### **Credit points and level**

2 SQA Credits at SCQF level 7: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

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### Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be most helpful if the candidate had skills in written communication, oral presentation and a general awareness of the role of the training function within organisations.

### Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skills	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

### 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.

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.

### 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](http://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. Candidates 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

Research the concept of continuous employee development.

##### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The concept of a learning organisation
- ◆ The concept and objectives of continuous employee development
- ◆ The benefits of implementing the practice of continuous employee development for an organisation
- ◆ Explaining the principal training strategies
- ◆ The responsibilities of individuals, line managers, training staff and senior managers to endorse continuous employee development

#### Outcome 2

Produce a training and development strategy for an organisation.

##### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Incorporating the organisational requirements in the strategy: corporate plan, culture and structure
- ◆ Short and long term business objectives
- ◆ Identifying organisational training/development needs
- ◆ Identifying training needs of individuals and groups
- ◆ Identifying any resource requirements and consequential implications for the organisation
- ◆ Training responsibilities of individuals, line managers and training staff and professionals within an organisation
- ◆ The role of the local government and associated agencies in encouraging organisations to train and develop their employees
- ◆ The range of current national training initiatives available
- ◆ The role of educational establishments and training providers
- ◆ The function of vocational bodies and professional bodies

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### **Outcome 3**

Design a training programme to meet specific organisational objectives.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Identifying training needs of individuals, groups or the organisation as a whole
- ◆ Identifying SMART learning objectives for the programme and the individual training sessions
- ◆ The selection of the most appropriate delivery methods, resources and presentation skills for the programme content
- ◆ Application of the most appropriate audio-visual aids and/or digital media where required
- ◆ Identifying the costs associated with preparing and delivering the training programme
- ◆ Applying relevant accepted theories of learning

### **Outcome 4**

Plan the evaluation of the training programme.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Applying accepted evaluation theories to the planning of an evaluation strategy
- ◆ Using appropriate evaluation tools and timescales to plan how the evaluation will take place
- ◆ Evaluating the associated costs and the benefits of the programme to the organisation

### **Evidence Requirements for this Unit**

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills for each Outcome in the following forms:

#### **Outcome 1**

Candidates will produce a written/oral statement on the subject of continuous employee development (minimum 500 words.) A minimum of five benefits to an organisation of its implementation must also be stated. The statement will evidence the candidates' research into the following topics:

- ◆ Concept of the learning organisation
- ◆ Concept and objectives of continuous development
- ◆ Principal training strategies
- ◆ The responsibilities of individuals, line managers, training staff and senior managers to endorse continuous employee development

#### **Outcome 2**

- ◆ Candidates will produce a training and development strategy, written or oral (minimum of 1,000 words) based on a given case study of a fictitious organisation of approximately 200+ employees. The Case Study will include:
  - The philosophy of the organisation incorporating the organisational requirements and business objectives which demonstrate the company's commitment to training.

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The training and development strategy will:

- ◆ identify training/development needs of individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole linking these to the timescales of the business objectives
- ◆ identify the resource implications of meeting the training/development needs
- ◆ propose how training responsibilities should be allocated across the organisation
- ◆ make at least two recommendations that will ensure the training and development goals will be achieved

Candidates will produce a commentary (minimum 750 words) also based on the same case study, which will:

- ◆ summarise the role of the skills development agencies supported by the local government and the implications for the organisation
- ◆ describe at least three current national training initiatives and their value to the organisation
- ◆ incorporate the role of training providers and educational establishments as well as the function of vocational bodies and professional bodies in the training and development of employees

### Outcome 3

Candidates will design a written training programme which is to be between 2–3 hours in duration, based on the same case study as Outcome 2. The programme should cover the following:

- ◆ an introductory paragraph describing the rationale for the programme, specifying who the training programme is aimed at (individuals, groups or the organisation as a whole) and describing the learning theories which have influenced the design of the programme (minimum 500 words)
- ◆ overall aim and objectives for the programme and the training sessions to be written in SMART format and to take account of training needs identified
- ◆ produce a written Training Plan which will include a variety of delivery methods and presentation styles
- ◆ produce written Training Session Plans, as appropriate, to include the use of a variety of audio-visual aids and/or digital media as appropriate to the content of the programme
- ◆ a list of approximate costs for the preparation and delivery of the programme

### Outcome 4

Candidates will plan and produce a written evaluation strategy for the training programme in Outcome 3 to describe how the programme will be evaluated. The evaluation strategy will measure:

- ◆ the extent to which the objectives of the programme have been met
- ◆ the reaction of the delegates to the programme and its content
- ◆ the associated costs with regard to the financial viability of the programme
- ◆ the perceived benefits to the organisation and whether the programme is a worthwhile proposition for future training

The evaluation strategy will include an explanation of the choice of evaluation methods and materials selected to gather the information required for the evaluation of the programme. The timescales involved in the evaluation process will also be explained.

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Product evidence will include one example of each of the evaluation materials to be used.

Candidates will also write a short paragraph (500 words) explaining the evaluation theory/ies used to guide the production of the evaluation strategy.

Conditions of assessment: open-book in learners' own time. Timescale is at the discretion of the centre.

### Unit specification: support notes

**Unit title:** Continuous Workforce Development (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 80 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The Unit is designed to provide candidates with a knowledge and understanding of how organisations identify and implement the training and development of their employees for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. This Unit may form part of a Group Award or be delivered as a stand-alone Unit.

The Unit focuses on how training and development of employees is decided upon with particular reference to the training philosophy of an organisation and its willingness to develop its employees. This is explained further within the context of company training and within the role of the Scottish Government in developing the skill base of the population as a whole.

The following notes give additional information on each Outcome:

**Outcome 1** — this Outcome will enable candidates to be fully aware of the concepts that shape an organisation and commit them to implement continuous employee development.

- ◆ Concept of what a learning organisation is — candidates might care to read the exposition by Peter Senge with regard to this concept. The basis of the concept is that the organisation facilitates and encourages learning for its employees at all levels. This is important when organisations are going through a phase of organisational transformation so that all employees are well prepared for the changes.
- ◆ Concept and objectives of continuous development — organisations continue to make changes in our competitive world and for organisations to continue to succeed, will depend on the ability of their employees to adjust to the new challenges. Therefore, the objectives of continuous development is to:
  - improve performance across the organisation
  - identify potential and harness it
  - succession planning so the organisation is well prepared.
- ◆ The practice of continuous development of employees will bring benefits to an organisation — these benefits might be:
  - increased motivation
  - realisation of the labour force's potential
  - reduced labour turnover
  - organisational stability
  - multi-skilling
  - flexibility
  - fewer skills shortages
  - unifying forces

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- ◆ The principal strategies that organisations can use to develop their employees are:
  - development on the job
  - through work experience
  - structured self-development programmes
  - formal training
  - competence assessment
  
- ◆ The responsibilities of individuals, line managers, training staff and senior managers to endorse continuous employee development:
  - Individual employees should be encouraged to 'spread the word' about their achievements when undertaking training and development.
  - Line managers should use appraisals to encourage their staff to develop.
  - Training staff should ensure their training is interesting and motivating and that they constantly strive to engage with staff to encourage continuous development.
  - Senior managers should ensure a suitable budget is given over to support continuous development for the benefit of the organisation.

**Outcome 2** — this Outcome will enable candidates to better grasp the essential components that require to be taken account of and their importance to the production of a satisfactory training strategy for an organisation.

- ◆ The corporate plan, corporate culture and corporate structure are key organisational requirements that need to be identified and in particular, decide how these three parts might influence any training strategy and the philosophy of the company as a whole. Training strategies should therefore, be specifically focused on meeting the short and long term business objectives and should be relevant to the organisational context.
- ◆ Identifying what the overall training and development needs are for the organisation can take time, effort and skill to produce. Within this is the identification of training/development needs of individuals which may be very diverse in both content and level and costly to fund. Groups of employees may require the same type of training and this should prove to be more cost effective and easier to achieve.
- ◆ Training will be the responsibility of individuals to undertake what is relevant to their job and what is pertinent for job progression and promotion. They should take advantage of any opportunities to improve themselves for the benefit of the organisation. Line Managers have a responsibility to identify their team's individual and group training needs usually through the process of annual career appraisal. Training staff/professionals within the organisation have a responsibility to ensure that any training programmes they develop are suitable and applicable to the identified needs.
- ◆ It is also important when writing a Training Strategy to look outside the organisation and think about the national context within which the organisation is operating. The vast majority of organisations operate within an industry sector (for example, business and finance; hospitality; retail; construction) and each of these sectors will benefit from the Scottish Government that provides support for the development of the organisation and its people. The Scottish Government should ideally identify key priorities for achieving business development and involve itself in training for three main reasons — development of the national economy; development of the skill base of the population and to maximise competitive advantage of Scottish industries. It is important that candidates appreciate the role of the Government wanting to improve life chances for young people, support economic growth and increase the number of jobs and so to attain this vision, the Government has established a network of agencies with specific roles in the process.



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It is imperative that candidates keep up-to-date with this network of agencies because they can frequently change depending on their funding and their focus. Those mentioned here are current as at July 2015.

Network of agencies (as at July 2015):

Scottish Enterprise — <https://www.scottish-enterprise.com/> — is central to the delivery of the Scottish Government's vision. One of the key themes for Scottish Enterprise is learning and skills and the key role that they have to play in meeting national targets for training. It is also responsible for the delivery of some national training schemes.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise — <http://www.hie.co.uk/about-hie/what-we-do.html> — HIE is an agency of the Scottish Government and works with private businesses, voluntary organisation and public bodies to deliver a range of business support services.

Skills Development Scotland — [www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/) — SDS is responsible for the delivery of careers, skills and training service in Scotland. Working closely with SDS means that Scottish Enterprise can support businesses to address skills and training issues to grow their business and help them manage change. SDS also support local initiatives aimed at achieving the Government's national targets for education and training and these are:

- Investors in People (IiP)
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs)
- Vocational Qualifications (SVQs/NVQs)
- Employability Fund
- Our Skillsforce
- My World of Work

Sector Skills Councils — <http://fissw.org/sector-skills-council-body/directory-of-sscs/> — SSCs are licensed by the Government through the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

Educational Establishments — Higher and Further Education Colleges — provide training and qualifications in a variety of vocational subjects, eg hairdressing, construction, cookery, engineering, management on a full time, part time or day release basis.

Training Providers — are independent training companies that provide training in specific subject/skills areas either through Government funded schemes or by direct payment from their clients.

Vocational Bodies — <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5656.html> — SQA is a vocational body and one of the biggest in Scotland.

Professional Bodies — <http://www.totalprofessions.com/more-about-professions/role-of-professional-bodies> — this website gives general information about what a professional body is and its purpose.

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**Outcome 3** — this Outcome will enable candidates to gain the skills necessary to prepare a Training Programme from scratch. The candidates should present the information for the programme in a folder with the necessary paperwork in order of use as if they were preparing to deliver the programme.

The programme is to be of 2 to 3 hours in length. Therefore what the candidates have to produce is:

- ◆ A rationale(reason) for the programme as an introductory paragraph.
- ◆ A training plan/timetable — this will show the overall timings for all the sub-sections of the programme. This is like an itinerary for the training day.
- ◆ Training Session Plans — these are what the trainer will use on the training day to keep their training sessions on track and to time. These will also help the trainer to be well prepared in advance for the training. These session plans should be able to be picked up by any trainer who will be able to understand how to deliver the training session using a variety of delivery methods and will know what resources for the session are to be used.
- ◆ Training Objectives — the programme should have an Overall Training Aim for the day and then Training Objectives for each training session. These should be written in a SMART format.
- ◆ Any copies of learner handouts, PowerPoint presentations, Activity sheets, list of videos and/or websites should be prepared and copies put in the folder also.
- ◆ A list of realistic approximate costs for the training event should be prepared, itemising the resources to be used. For example: costs associated with:
  - the possible hire of a training room specifically for the training
  - the possible hire of presentation equipment
  - the possible fee for a specialist speaker for the training sessions
  - the provision of refreshments for training event
  - the cost of any stationery, other equipment used during the event.

**Outcome 4** — this Outcome will enable candidates to write an evaluation strategy and then prepare evaluation materials in preparation for evaluation of the training programme. The materials should be designed to give qualitative and quantitative information in order to judge the value of the training programme for the organisation.

- ◆ An Evaluation Strategy - this will describe what, why, when, where, who and how the programme will be evaluated. Candidates will:
  - devise a method to measure how well the objectives have been met — some kind of short questions or quiz.
  - design an evaluation questionnaire to measure the reaction of the delegates on the programme.
  - design a method to decide how cost effective the training programme has been.
  - devise a method to check the benefits to the organisation of the programme — this may be by devising an initial questionnaire around possible benefits and a follow-up questionnaire after a few months, so a comparison can be made. For example, the initial questionnaire will ask what happens within the organisation at present and the follow-up questionnaire will ask what changes have occurred since the training and how have these changes been of benefit.
- ◆ Candidates will also explain relevant learning and evaluation theories they have researched and would intend to implement.

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- ◆ **NB:** Examples of the evaluation materials to be used may include, for example: Question Sheet, Multiple choice and online questionnaires, Quiz, Happy Sheet, Interviews with Line Managers, Forum groups.

### **Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit**

This Unit should be seen in the context of an employing organisation of 200 or more employees in any sector of employment, private or public.

The emphasis should be on the contribution that individuals can make to an organisation and in particular, upon the management and use of that contribution.

The Unit should also be taught within the context of achieving organisational goals and how the skills and potential of individuals and groups can be harnessed to achieve these. The various ways in which the return from an organisation's human resources may be optimised, should be stressed.

Candidates should be encouraged to make use of their own experience, particularly any work experience which included personal training and/or development. Failing this, candidates should be encouraged to make use of the wide range of academic and professional literature available.

Reference to current training and development issues is to be encouraged and the use of case study material to compare practices could be used to justify recommended strategies and procedures.

Outcomes 1 and 2 should take 40% of the delivery time and Outcomes 3 and 4 should take the other 60% of the time. Outcomes 1 and 2 are providing the context for continuous development whereas Outcome 3 and 4 are producing a programme for actual training and development of staff and should require more in-depth research and production of a full training programme. The work produced should be to a standard that a trainer could take the package of information and deliver the training programme. The approach for all four Outcomes should be a learner-centred, participative and practical one where blended learning is paramount.

### **Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit**

Assessment for all four Outcomes may take the form of open-book assessments based on stimulus material. Candidates may compile responses from their own research. Assessments may be integrated between Outcomes.

Centres will have discretion in designing assessments so that they can assess Outcomes individually or combine Outcomes where they consider appropriate.

An assessment support pack and marking guidelines have been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Candidates' evidence can be authenticated by oral questioning or a professional discussion on the content of the evidence with the Assessor.

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment as can be seen in the Evidence Requirements for the Unit. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to candidates.

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

### 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 candidate 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Throughout the Unit, candidates should be able to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 by reading, evaluating and understanding written communication of different types and should be producing written documents that convey a range of information and ideas to solve problems. Through group discussion, candidates could have the opportunity to communicate orally to individuals and groups by presenting ideas and complex information to others and listening to and understanding others' responses.

Candidates may also be able to develop the Core Skill component of Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 by analysing issues and devising and recommending appropriate solutions in Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Candidates may be able to develop the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5 through carrying out a range of *ICT* activities, such as internet searches and word processing, in the course of any research for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in particular.

This unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6.

## 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: Continuous Workforce Development (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The purpose of this Unit is to provide you with a knowledge and understanding of how organisations identify and implement the training and development of their employees for the benefit of the organisation. In particular, this Unit will develop your ability to produce a training strategy for an organisation, design a training programme and explain how to implement the practice of continuous development of employees within an organisation.

- ◆ In Outcome 1 you will undertake some independent and group research into the concept of continuous development, what the benefits for the organisation will be if they decide to implement this practice for their employees. Your research will involve finding out the latest theories on this subject and what the implications will be for the organisation in the case study.
- ◆ In Outcome 2 You will be introduced to the different philosophies that organisations adopt and what their key business objectives are. You will learn how to produce a training and development strategy based on a case study of a fictitious organisation. To enable you to do this you will learn how to identify training and development needs of individuals, groups and organisations as a whole and how they link to the short and longer term aims of the business objectives. You will also be facilitated and encouraged to make recommendations about how the organisation can fulfil their training and development goals. You will be supported to find out more about the role of the skills development agencies supported by the Scottish Government and the implications for training within the organisation.
- ◆ In Outcome 3 you will learn how to design and produce a training programme of a specified length making sure you provide aims, objectives and a rationale for the training. You will then think how to make the actual training an interesting, informative and engaging experience for the participants by choosing participative and learner-centred approaches. You will also learn how to prepare an evaluation strategy to ensure that the training programme you have produced is meeting expectations and is cost effective for the organisation.
- ◆ In Outcome 4 you will be thinking about how you can find out if the training programme designed in Outcome 2 has been successful. Who would you ask, what will you use to find out the information about the value of the programme for the candidates and also the organisation. You will research learning and evaluation theories to help you design appropriate evaluation tools. You will also plan an Evaluation Strategy in order to gather reliable and measurable information that could be analysed. The plan will state when and how evaluation will take place.

Over all four Outcomes you will develop your written communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills by analysing issues and devising and recommending appropriate solutions. You may also develop your oral communication skills through group discussion with fellow candidates. You will be encouraged to present ideas and complex information to others as well as listening to and understanding others' responses. Through your research for information and production of your evidence for all the Outcomes, you will develop your ICT skills.

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This Unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when you achieve the Unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to show you have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6.