

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness

Unit code: HR0K 48

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable candidates to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes which underpin personal effectiveness. It will provide them with the underpinning knowledge to audit their own personal effectiveness; equip them with the skills to create an action plan to develop their own personal effectiveness - based on the audit of their existing strengths and development needs; provide them with a framework to implement the action plan; and, require them to evaluate their plan, its implementation and its contribution to developing their personal effectiveness. Candidates will be able to apply the Unit to personal effectiveness in personal and/or vocational contexts.

The unit is available at three levels (SCQF Level 6 [HP4Y 46], SCQF Level 7 [HR0G 47] and SCQF level 8 [HR0K 48]). Key aspects that differentiate candidate performance at each level are the:

- level of support required by the candidate
- detail of the action plan produced
- analytical approach applied to self-assessment techniques.

Full details are contained in each unit specification.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. develop self-awareness and their use of personal skills
2. demonstrate an understanding of effective approaches to stress management
3. develop and apply a range of interpersonal skills for working effectively with others.

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

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from National 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have good personal and interpersonal skills. These may be demonstrated by the achievement of the Core Skills, Working with Others at SCQF level 5, Communication at SCQF level 5, or the National Course/Units in Personal and Social Education/Development at SCQF level 5. Adults returning to higher education may also demonstrate prior knowledge and skills.

Core skills: The Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 is embedded within this unit.

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 nature of the Unit requires that it be delivered over a period of time - sufficient for candidates to complete the developmental activities. Candidates should be encouraged and supported to relate the Unit activities and requirements to their own personal and vocational contexts.

Support can be provided through a wide range of group and individual tutorial activities and guidance. Where appropriate the Personal Effectiveness Action Plan, arising from this Unit, may be an element of a wider Personal Development Planning process undertaken by the candidate.

The Unit is included in a number of SQA Advanced Certificate and SQA Advanced Diploma group awards. It may be helpful if the Unit is taught and assessed within the context of the particular group award to which it contributes but care should be taken to ensure that the wider personal aspects of Personal Effectiveness are acknowledged.

Assessment: The primary source of assessment evidence for achievement of the Unit Outcomes will arise from the candidate's Action Plan and supporting documentation. A case study will be used to assess Outcome 2. The activities associated with the Unit should provide candidates with ample opportunities to generate and gather evidence of achievement. The nature and operation of the Unit requires that it should be assessed holistically.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

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. Sampling is not appropriate for this Unit.

Outcome 1

Develop self-awareness and their use of personal skills.

Knowledge and/or skills

A candidate will need to know:

- the principles underpinning
 - the concepts and application - as key elements of self-awareness - of personal strengths and development needs
 - a sample of self-assessment techniques appropriate to his/her own situation e.g. SWOT analysis, Johari's Window, Personal Constructs
 - effective time management
 - use of 'SMART' targets
 - effective problem solving
 - effective task management
- ways in which the above may be combined and applied - in the form of an Action Plan - appropriate to his/her personal and employment circumstances
- appropriate ways to obtain and give constructive feedback
- how to effectively monitor performance and implement the action plan.

A candidate will need to be able to:

- identify and evidence his/her personal strengths and development needs
- reflect on his/her identified personal strengths and development needs with reference to feedback from others
- create an Action Plan for his/her development need(s), implement the plan; and in the context of the available time review/evaluate the plan and its implementation
- evaluate with justification the approach used to improve their performance and recommendations for future approaches.

Evidence requirements

To achieve this outcome, at SCQF Level 8, a candidate needs to present an Action Plan, together with supporting documentary evidence, which:

- identifies his/her personal strengths and development need(s)
- demonstrates that he/she has been able to apply - and use as the basis of the Action Plan - self-assessment technique(s) appropriate to his/her personal and/or vocational contexts
- demonstrates that he/she has undertaken an evaluation of his/her time management and has used it to inform his/her Action Plan, specifically utilising SMART targets
- includes evidence of a personal audit of his/her problem solving and task management abilities
- includes documentation of ways the plans are implemented.

At SCQF Level 8 candidates will be required to demonstrate a high level of independent action, reflection and autonomous learning; knowledge of self-assessment and action planning techniques and procedures; and, the ability to select those procedures that are most appropriate to their own circumstances. They must provide a clear rationale for their selection and demonstrate an awareness of the costs and benefits of their choices. They must be able to show that they have used the procedures to gather sufficient evidence to base judgments regarding their strengths and development needs. Their Action Plan and the additional documentary evidence must be presented in such a way as to demonstrate that they have undertaken the processes systematically and critically. The candidate should be required to demonstrate the capacity to link the knowledge and skill requirements to their own personal and/or vocational situation. Where the Unit is undertaken as a group award in a particular vocational context candidates should be required to relate elements such as time management, problem solving and task management to their employment situation. Assessment of the Outcome in this context should reflect the levels of challenge and rigour required of an award at Level 8

Evidence for the different SCQF levels would be reflected by the:

- level of support required by the candidate
- detail of the action plan produced
- analytical approach applied to self-assessment techniques.

Assessment guidelines

The primary source of assessment evidence for Outcomes 1 and 3 will arise from the candidate's work in planning, undertaking and reviewing/evaluating his/her Action Plan.

The candidate must demonstrate through the personal Action Plan and the documentary evidence it contains that he/she has undertaken, systematically and critically, the tasks associated with the Unit. Although the nature of the Unit requires that candidates are able to interpret the requirements to suit their own personal and/or vocational contexts, every candidate must ensure that the evidence presented demonstrates achievement of the knowledge and skill requirements of each of Outcomes 1 and 3.

Candidates must provide evidence that demonstrates that they have:

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- audited their strengths and development needs with respect to personal effectiveness
- created an Action Plan, on the basis of their audit
- implemented their plan, responding where appropriate to feedback and changing circumstances
- reviewed their plan and its implementation; and, evaluated its contribution to enhancing their personal effectiveness
- reviewed the effectiveness of the strategy chosen to implement the plan.

In undertaking the Unit tasks and activities candidates will have had numerous opportunities to generate and gather evidence regarding their achievement of the Unit Outcomes.

Outcome 2

Demonstrate an understanding of effective approaches to stress management.

Knowledge and/or skills

- the symptoms and causes of stress in self and others
- a range of ways in which stress can be recognised, reduced and/or resolved
- the relationship between the concept of 'work/life balance' and stress, together with the implications of imbalance - from both a personal and an organisational perspective
- a range of preventative/coping strategies and skills and how they might be applied

Evidence requirements

To enable candidates to provide evidence they must be presented with a scenario (vocational or personal) which has both potential and obvious elements of stress.

They should be given questions to this scenario and asked to respond to them.

The written and/or oral evidence presented must demonstrate that the candidate can use the underpinning knowledge and skills listed to analyse a personal and/or vocational situation and to recommend effective approaches to prevent, reduce and resolve stress.

The evidence should demonstrate that the candidate can:

- identify causes of stress and potential stress inducers in self and others
- make accurate references to relevant theoretical work, where appropriate
- suggest approaches that would be effective in the particular situation and provide a valid argument to support the suggested approaches.

Evidence for the different SCQF levels would be reflected by the quality of candidate response, revealing:

- a greater depth of analysis
- knowledge and variety of alternative approaches
- relevance of the solutions proposed.

At SCQF Level 8 the evidence presented should demonstrate the candidate's ability to master the underpinning principles and to apply them to his/her own personal and employment

circumstances. The evidence should demonstrate the candidate's ability for independent action, reflection and autonomous learning. Where the Unit is undertaken as a group award in a particular vocational context, candidates should be required to relate the knowledge and skill requirements of this Outcome - stress audit and management - to their employment situation. Assessment of the Outcome in this context should reflect the levels of challenge and rigour required of an award at Level 8

Assessment Guidelines

A case study will take the form of a written account of a personal or vocational scenario. However, other formats may be used, for example a video scenario. Question would be posed against the source materials.

Outcome 3

Develop and apply a range of interpersonal skills for working effectively with others.

Knowledge and/or skills

A candidate will need to know:

- the interpersonal characteristics/skills which are said to underpin effective working with others - for example: communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), negotiating skills, assertiveness skills
- the potential causes of conflict, in personal and work related circumstances, and a range of skills/strategies for conflict reduction and resolution
- a range of ways in which interpersonal skills can be developed and enhanced and the ways in which these might be identified and developed through his/her Action Plan.

A candidate will need to be able to:

- audit his/her own strengths and development needs in respect of interpersonal skills and his/her own ability to work effectively with other people - in particular in respect to communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), negotiating skills and assertiveness skills
- identify the potential causes of conflict in his/her personal and/or vocational circumstances and develop appropriate strategies and skills for conflict reduction and resolution
- detail within the action plan activities which demonstrate his/her ability to develop his/her own interpersonal skills and the ability to recognise, reduce and resolve conflict.

Evidence requirements

To achieve this Outcome, at SCQF Level 8, a candidate must present, as part of his/her Action Plan evidence:

- of his/her understanding of the interpersonal characteristics/skills which underpin effective working with others - including communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), negotiating skills, assertiveness skills by undertaking a personal audit of his/her own strengths and development needs in these respects

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- of his/her ability to identify, analyse and develop his/her interpersonal skills whilst implementing the plan.

At SCQF Level 8 the evidence presented should demonstrate the candidate's ability to master the underpinning principles and to apply them to his/her own personal and employment circumstances. The evidence should demonstrate the candidate's ability for independent action and autonomous learning. Where the Unit is undertaken as a group award in a particular vocational context candidates should be required to relate the knowledge and skill requirements of this Outcome - interpersonal skills audit and action plan - to their employment situation. Assessment of the Outcome in this context should reflect the levels of challenge and rigour required of an award at Level 8.

Evidence for the different SCQF levels would be reflected by the:

- level of support required by the candidate
- detail of the action plan produced
- analytical approach applied to self-assessment techniques.

Assessment Guidelines

The primary source of assessment evidence for Outcomes 1 and 3 will arise from the candidate's work in planning, undertaking and reviewing/evaluating his/her Action Plan.

The candidate must demonstrate through the personal Action Plan and the documentary evidence it contains that he/she has undertaken, systematically and critically, the tasks associated with the Unit. Although the nature of the Unit requires that candidates are able to interpret the requirements to suit their own personal and employment circumstances, every candidate must ensure that the evidence presented demonstrates achievement of the knowledge and skill requirements of each of Outcomes 1 and 3.

Candidates must provide evidence that demonstrates that they have:

- audited their strengths and development needs with respect to personal effectiveness (ie personal skills; interpersonal skills)
- created an Action Plan, on the basis of their audit
- implemented their plan, responding where appropriate to feedback and changing circumstances
- reviewed their plan and its implementation; and, evaluated its contribution to enhancing their personal effectiveness.

In undertaking the Unit tasks and activities candidates will have had numerous opportunities to generate and gather evidence regarding their achievement of the Unit Outcomes.

In addition to the presentation of evidence through the action plan and supporting documents, at Level 7 and Level 8, candidates should also be required to make oral presentations - demonstrating their achievement of the knowledge and skill requirements of the Unit Outcomes. Direct observation, assessment of role-plays and third party testimony are required to generate assessment evidence at the higher levels.

Administrative Information

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SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes 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

The Unit is included in a number of SQA Advanced Certificate and SQA Advanced Diploma group awards. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the context of the particular group award to which it contributes and that candidates are encouraged to relate their self-assessment and action planning activities to the particular vocational context.

The Unit is intended to enable candidates to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that underpin personal effectiveness. The main content areas – personal skills; the causes and resolution of stress; and interpersonal skills – are organised around a set of self-assessment (audit), case study and action planning activities. In undertaking these activities candidates should be encouraged to relate the Unit content to their own personal and/or vocational contexts.

Outcome 1 focuses on equipping the candidate to undertake a personal skills audit and to use this as a basis for an action plan to enhance his/her personal skills. Outcome 2 requires candidates to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the causes of stress and ways in which it might be reduced and resolved. Outcome 3 is also based on self-assessment and action planning activities. In delivery, these elements should be regarded as complementary and the candidate's action plan and the documentary evidence gathered should be regarded as a mechanism for holistic assessment. (See below)

For Outcome 1 candidates will need to develop an understanding of the concepts and terminology associated with an audit of personal strengths and development needs, together with an understanding of self-assessment techniques and procedures appropriate to their own personal/employment circumstances, e.g. SWOT Analysis, Johari's Window; Personal Constructs (e.g. Kelly). Each candidate should select and use a self-assessment technique(s) suitable to his/her circumstances. In doing this the candidate must identify and evidence including feedback from other people, his/her strengths and development needs, in particular, with respect to time management, problem solving and task management.

The self-analysis should be used by the candidate as the basis for the production of an action plan, designed to enhance his/her personal skills. The plan must then be implemented. The candidate is required to evaluate the plan and the approach used to undertake the plan and its implementation. Documentary and supporting evidence must be gathered and presented, together with the action plan, by the candidate for purposes of assessment.

In order to achieve Outcome 2 candidates will be required to develop an understanding of the causes of personal stress and the factors associated with its reduction and resolution. They will require an understanding of the key concepts and terminology. In particular they should be able to recognise the causes and symptoms of stress in self and others; recognise and describe

the concept of work/life balance; and identify preventative and coping strategies. They should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by analysing the stress factors present in a case study and by identifying appropriate approaches for its reduction and resolution.

In Outcome 3, the focus is on a range of interpersonal skills – communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), negotiating skills and assertiveness skills. Candidates will require an understanding of the concepts and terminology associated with these skills and their application. They will also need to develop an understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict, within personal and work contexts; and, an understanding of the strategies which can be used to reduce and resolve conflict. As an adjunct to the self-assessment and action planning activities associated with Outcome 1, candidates will be required to undertake a self-assessment of their strengths and development needs; and to devise, implement and evaluate an action plan to develop his/her interpersonal skills.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The Unit is organised around a process that involves candidates in:

- an audit of their personal effectiveness ‘strengths’ and ‘development needs’
- devising an Action Plan to address their development needs and enhance their personal effectiveness
- developing their knowledge and understanding of the causes and resolution of stress
- implementing their Action Plan over a period of time (usually at least six/eight months)
- evaluating their plan, its implementation and its contribution to enhancing their personal effectiveness
- evaluating the effectiveness of the approach they used to develop their skills with justifications and recommendations for future work.

The self-assessment and action planning process has to be performed by the candidate in respect of three aspects of personal effectiveness – personal skills; knowledge and understanding of stress; and interpersonal skills. Candidates should be made aware of the need to undertake the process – and present appropriate evidence for assessment purposes – in respect of each of the three aspects. However, candidates should be encouraged to regard these three aspects of a single action plan. It is recommended that the self-assessment and action planning process be introduced and supported at the beginning of the Unit along with Outcome 1 – Personal Skills. The requirements for Outcome 2 – knowledge and understanding of stress; and, Outcome 3 – interpersonal skills – may then be addressed as complementary elements of the action plan.

Candidates should also be made aware of the need for them to gather and present documentary evidence along with their action plan – to demonstrate their achievement of the Unit Outcomes.

In order to achieve this Unit candidates must gather and present sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they have met all of the Unit Outcomes identified in the Statement of Standards – above. The primary source of evidence will be the documents gathered and retained by the candidate in undertaking their self-assessment, needs analysis and action planning activities. This evidence should be retained/presented as a portfolio or folder. The content will vary from candidate to candidate but it is likely to include:

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- completed self-assessment instruments, such as SWOT, Johari's Window; time and/or stress audits; interpersonal skills review
- analyses of strengths and development needs, based on the evidence arising from the self-assessment tasks
- an appropriate and challenging action plan – linked to each of the three main aspects (Outcomes) of the Unit – founded on the self-assessment and needs analysis activities
- evidence to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the causes of stress and approaches to its reduction and resolution
- documentary evidence of the attempts to implement each aspect of the plan including modifications in light of feedback or changed circumstances
- evidence that the plan, its implementation and impact – on the candidate's development of personal effectiveness – has been evaluated and the findings used to assist the candidate to identify future development needs and how they might be addressed
- evaluation with justifications of the approach used to improve their performance including recommendations for future approaches.

In addition to the documentary evidence candidates may be asked to make an oral presentation to demonstrate their achievement of the Unit Outcomes.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Special needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness

By completing this Unit you will gain important knowledge and skills to help you improve your personal effectiveness.

The unit focuses on three main areas:

- *self-awareness and personal skills* – such as, self-assessment, time management, problem solving and task management
- *knowledge and understanding of the causes of stress and approaches to its reduction and resolution*
- *interpersonal skills* – such as, communication skills, working with others, negotiating skills, assertiveness skills.

The unit will enable you to:

- identify the requirements for personal effectiveness
- carry out a review of your existing personal effectiveness, strengths and development needs
- create an Action Plan – based on your review – to improve your own personal effectiveness
- implement your Action Plan
- evaluate your plan, its implementation and its contribution to developing your own personal effectiveness
- evaluate the method you adopted to develop your personal effectiveness.

You will be able to relate the activities and outcomes of this Unit to your own personal and work/career development.

On completion of the Unit you will be able to:

1. develop self-awareness and their use of personal skills
2. demonstrate an understanding of effective approaches to stress management
3. develop and apply a range of interpersonal skills for effective working with others.

Your tutor will provide you with guidance and support in completing the Unit activities. However, because the unit focuses on your personal development and effectiveness, it is your responsibility to gather, and present in your portfolio, sufficient evidence to demonstrate that you have met the assessment requirements associated with each of the three main outcomes.