

SQA Advanced Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Individual Employment Relations: Practice

Unit code: HR38 47

Superclass: AJ

Publication date: August 2017

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop knowledge of employment relations and employment law issues and to apply this knowledge to a practical employment setting. Candidates will develop an awareness of the context of employment practice and identify key issues that impact upon the employment relationship.

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

- 1 Explain employment relations issues and the application of policies and procedures for managing these relationships.
- 2 Explain the application of good practice relating to equality and diversity issues in the workplace.
- 3 Provide guidance on the implementation of a range of employment relations practices.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at SCQF level 5 or similar qualifications or experience. It is recommended that candidates have undertaken the SQA Advanced Unit *Individual Employment Relations: Law* or a similar course of study prior to starting this Unit.

Credit points and level

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

**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.*

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in 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 assessment exemplar for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Individual Employment Relations: Practice

Unit code: HR38 47

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.

Outcome 1

Explain employment relations issues and the application of policies and procedures for managing these relationships.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Theory and factors affecting the employment relationship
- ◆ The psychological contract
- ◆ Policies and procedures that foster the employment relationship
- ◆ Methods of reviewing performance and providing motivation for improvement
- ◆ Legal requirements of the employment relationship

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe theory affecting the employment relationship.
- ◆ explain the internal and external factors affecting the employment relationship.
- ◆ define the psychological contract and explain its importance.
- ◆ describe key policies and procedures that foster the employment relationship.
- ◆ explain methods of reviewing performance and providing motivation for improvement.

Evidence provided must be in line with current legislation affecting the employment relationship.

Outcome 2

Explain the application of good practice relating to equality and diversity in the workplace.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Equality and employment legislation and codes of practice
- ◆ Discrimination issues
- ◆ Diversity management

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the application of equality and diversity policies and procedures within the workplace in line with current legislation.
- ◆ provide guidance on how to handle discrimination.
- ◆ explain the differences of approach between managing equality and managing diversity.
- ◆ describe how successful organisations manage diversity.

Outcome 3

Provide guidance on the implementation of a range of employment relations practices.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Policies for promoting good employee relations
- ◆ Policies and practices for engaging employees and for avoiding conflict
- ◆ Mechanisms for resolving conflict between individuals and the organisation
- ◆ Disciplinary and grievance procedures
- ◆ Legislative framework and codes of practice

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the appropriate policies and mechanisms for dealing with conflict within organisations.
- ◆ explain the components of disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- ◆ describe the appropriate planning, conduct and documentation necessary to meet legal and organisational requirements for employee relations.
- ◆ provide guidance to managers and staff on employee relations practice.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Individual Employment Relations: Practice

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

It is suggested that the Unit should be prefaced by a brief reminder of the scope of employment law impacting upon the employment relationship and as it is anticipated that this Unit follows on from *Individual Employment Relations: Law* a brief recap of these laws should be given at the outset.

It is important for centres to review employment legislation on a regular basis as this is an area that is changing rapidly.

Outcome 1 looks at policies and procedures for managing the employment relationship. It covers the following areas:

- ◆ individuals taking time off or leave.
- ◆ pay and benefits.
- ◆ data protection.
- ◆ the psychological contract.
- ◆ reviewing performance.
- ◆ the application of employment legislation within the organisation.

Outcome 2 introduces the candidate to the application of current equality legislation within organisations and covers:

- ◆ all types of unlawful discrimination including discrimination in areas such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- ◆ equal pay.
- ◆ rehabilitation of offenders.
- ◆ socio-economic disadvantage.
- ◆ the application of good practice in organisations.
- ◆ equality and diversity policies and procedures and how they are implemented in the core human resource areas of
 - recruitment and selection,
 - learning and development
 - pay and reward and employee relations.

It then looks at procedures for handling discrimination within organisations, and the difference in approach from between managing equality and managing diversity.

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Outcome 3 introduces the candidate to the various mechanisms for individuals to promote employee engagement and to resolve conflict within an organisation.

This Outcome is concerned with:

- ◆ mechanisms for promoting good employee relations practice.
- ◆ resolving conflict between individuals and organisations.
- ◆ internal procedures and external bodies.
- ◆ purpose of engagement and communication strategies.
- ◆ purpose and components of disciplinary procedures.
- ◆ purpose and components of grievance procedures.
- ◆ legislative framework.
- ◆ the ACAS code of practice and good practice.

In addition, the role of Trade Unions/negotiations should be taught within this Outcome.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This is a mandatory Unit within the SQA Advanced Certificate/SQA Advanced Diploma Human Resource Management Group Award but could be delivered within other appropriate awards as a stand-alone Unit.

If this Unit is being delivered within different Group Awards, it is anticipated that the Outcomes and assessments are contextualised as is appropriate.

Given the reliance on a candidate being familiar with the principles of employment law, it is anticipated that this Unit follows on from *Individual Employment Relations: Law*.

Teaching should be focused on helping candidates to understand not just how the law works but how it has an impact on the practical issues facing team leaders, managers and HR specialists on a day to day basis. Although the Outcomes contain a range of theoretical aspects, the emphasis should be on understanding the framework and its impact. To aid this process, the use of recent examples drawn from current affairs is to be encouraged using classroom discussion, clips of current employment news and review of professional as well as political journals. It is often useful in this context to invite a speaker who has practical knowledge of employment relations to speak to candidates and to establish links with the local CIPD with a view to encouraging student attendance at events and to discuss the possibility of arranging joint events.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit may be assessed using a variety of assessment instruments both written and practical; for example candidates may produce a briefing paper or report based upon a case study situation, work experience, or in response to open-book questions; there may also be a practical exercise such as an employee relations interview.

Candidates' evidence can be in written and or oral format.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

This Outcome may be assessed by candidates providing evidence in response to specific questions in open-book conditions.

Outcome 2

This Outcome may be assessed by candidates providing extended responses in relation to a case study in an open-book setting.

Outcome 3

This Outcome may be assessed by candidates producing a report, briefing paper or a response to a specific open-book question(s).

It is not expected that candidates would have to conduct a grievance or discipline interview but should be able to provide assistance and guidance on the implementation of the processes.

Online and Distance Learning

If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. Further information and advice can be found on our website (www.sqa.org.uk).

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Communication: Reading, Written and Oral at SCQF level 6

This Unit can provide the opportunity of responding to questions on key issues of individual employee relations which can provide underpinning knowledge by reading and interpreting complex information. Where assessments (eg responses to questions; producing guidance etc) are in written format, this would develop written communication for complex HRM performance management issues. Oral communication could also be developed through conducting and participating in employee relations interviews or group discussions.

Using Information Technology (ICT) at SCQF level 6

IT skills could be developed in this Unit, in particular through the use of the internet and other on-line resources when researching, eg current legislation and codes of practice on equality and diversity; employment relations practices; managing diversity success stories, etc.

Working with Others at SCQF level 6

This Core Skill could be developed through this Unit as candidates have to analyse employment relations practices and understand the psychological contract; promote cooperative working relating to equality and diversity in the workplace; provide guidance on

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

employee relations practice; overcome barriers such as disciplinary and grievance procedures; participate in an employee relations interview.

Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

This Unit offers many opportunities for candidates to tackle complex issues and problems within employment relations; equality and diversity in the workplace; and handling conflict, disciplinary and grievances etc. This can involve Critical Thinking, Planning/Organisation and Reviewing/Evaluating. They have to identify complex factors, assess their relevance, analyse ways to solve problems and their provide guidance to managers and staff.

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.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012, 2017

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

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: Individual Employment Relations: Practice

Individual Employment Relations: Practice is intended for anyone either working at or aspiring to work at the level of Human Resources assistant or administrator whose role might be to provide support for employee relations aspects of the Human Resource Management function. It is also suited to line managers, supervisors or team leaders who wish to gain a practical overview of employee relations issues affecting their management role. It is also of use for owners or managers of small businesses who similarly wish to gain skills in this area.

It would be helpful if you already had an understanding of current employment relations law before embarking on this Unit.

The aim of the Unit is to provide you with a working toolkit of how to apply employment law in practical terms in the workplace. Given the breadth of employee relations as a topic, this Unit deals with issues relating to certain key areas of employee relations, including:

- ◆ theory and factors affecting the employment relationship.
- ◆ the psychological contract.
- ◆ equality and diversity.
- ◆ grievance and discipline procedures.

On successful completion of this Unit you will be able to:

- ◆ explain employment relations issues and the application of policies and procedures for managing these relationships.
- ◆ explain the application of good practice relating to equality and diversity in the workplace.
- ◆ provide guidance on the implementation of a range of employment relations practices.

Assessment for this Unit can take a variety of forms, eg you may have to produce a briefing paper/report based upon a case study, your work experience, or in response to questions. There may also be practical exercises. Your tutor will advise of exact assessment arrangements for this Unit.