

SQA Advanced Unit specification: general information for centres

Unit title: Accommodation: Quality Assurance and Systems

Unit code: HV74 48

Superclass: VD

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Unit purpose

Successful accommodation businesses evaluate how they are meeting guest expectations on a daily basis; from seeking feedback at breakfast to asking people if they have enjoyed their stay.

To support these internal assessments, if accommodation businesses wish to receive a grade from an external body such as the AA or VisitScotland, they can also be assessed against set national quality assurance standards. National quality assurance standards cover a range of different accommodation properties from the smallest bed and breakfast to the largest resort hotels. The standards cover all aspects of the business from the quality and condition of the fixtures and fittings, through to the level of service a guest enjoys. How the business self-assess its quality of provision is vital if the business is to prove successful.

This unit is aimed at those who have responsibility for the management of quality assurance within a commercial accommodation business such as bed and breakfasts, guest houses, self-catering operations or hotels. It is designed to enable them to apply the principles of both internal and external quality assurance systems to an accommodation business.

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

- 1 Manage brand standards.
 - 2 Develop quality assurance systems in the workplace.
 - 3 Apply external quality assurance grading criteria to an accommodation operation.
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SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is anticipated that candidates will be employed, paid or voluntary, within an organisation in a hospitality setting. It is recommended that candidates have experience gained at a supervisory or management level within the hospitality industry and be confident in their use of words and numbers. There is no requirement for a candidate to demonstrate formal prior learning or experience to enable them to access this unit.

Credit points and level

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.*

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.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Accommodation: Quality Assurance and Systems

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to the *Evidence Requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

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

Manage brand standards.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Benchmarking
- ◆ Brand standards

Outcome 2

Develop quality assurance systems in the workplace.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Developing a quality assurance system
- ◆ Staff training

Outcome 3

Apply external quality assurance grading criteria to an accommodation operation.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ External quality assurance systems
- ◆ The quality assurance process
- ◆ External scoring and grading criteria
- ◆ The feedback process

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate all of the knowledge and/or Skills in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 by showing that they can, with reference to a commercial accommodation business:

- ◆ Identify benchmarking theory and describe key stages in the benchmarking process.
- ◆ Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of brand standards.
- ◆ Analyse the processes involved in managing predetermined brand standards.
- ◆ Describe how to influence change in brand standards.
- ◆ Analyse quality assurance parameters.
- ◆ Develop a quality assurance system.
- ◆ Identify staff training needs and develop a training plan.
- ◆ Analyse external quality assurance systems.
- ◆ Identify the range and scope of the quality assurance process.
- ◆ Analyse external scoring and grading criteria.
- ◆ Analyse feedback processes.
- ◆ Audit existing brand standards for a bedroom and bathroom using a recognised external grading system and make recommendations to both consolidate and improve the grade scored.
- ◆ Develop an action plan for an external quality assurance visit based on the audit findings.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Accommodation: Quality Assurance and Systems

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

Outcome 1

- ◆ Benchmarking:
 - establish area for benchmarking
 - identify issues within the area
 - identify benchmark level through competitor analysis
 - determine benchmark level for area by component part
 - develop area to meet benchmark
 - training staff to benchmark level
 - manage and enforce benchmark level
 - seek and review feedback
- ◆ Brand standards:
 - benefits:
 - uniformity of standard
 - ease of assessment
 - ease of training
 - reduces risk of error
 - customer brand loyalty
- ◆ Drawbacks:
 - inflexible
 - uniformity
 - reduces innovation
 - customer boredom with brand
- ◆ Managing predetermined brand standards:
 - ensuring uniformity
 - effective checking
 - feedback and review
 - recording compliance
- ◆ Influencing change in brand standards:
 - seeking feedback
 - proposing brand evolution

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Outcome 2

- ◆ Developing a quality assurance system:
 - scoping the workplace
 - setting goals
 - parameters
 - timescales
 - action planning
- ◆ Setting up a quality assurance system:
 - scoping
 - writing
 - sharing best practice
- ◆ Reviewing quality systems:
 - staff feedback
 - guest feedback
 - guest surveys
 - recording feedback
- ◆ Training the team:
 - dealing with resistance
 - incorporation into work routines
 - identifying performance issues
 - feedback systems

Outcome 3

- ◆ External quality assurance systems:
 - VisitScotland
 - The AA
- ◆ The quality assurance process:
 - what is assessed
 - what is not
 - benefits and drawback of external quality assurance
 - scope of quality assurance schemes
 - hotels
 - bed and breakfasts
 - guest houses
 - self-catering units
 - inns
 - caravan and camping parks
 - visitor attractions

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

- ◆ External scoring and grading criteria:
 - grade descriptors
 - star rating
 - relationship between star rating and scores
 - gold/red star ratings
 - areas scored
 - accommodation
 - public areas
 - reservations
 - service
 - food
 - scoring criteria
 - individual scores
 - range of scores
 - factors that determine scores
 - understanding quality criteria
 - determining quality
 - determining condition

- ◆ The feedback process:
 - preparing for quality assurance feedback
 - ensuring dispassion in feedback
 - accepting praise and criticism
 - closing a feedback session
 - working with external bodies
 - understanding the quality assurance relationship
 - determine future actions
 - maximising staff involvement
 - getting the most out of quality assurance
 - linking external quality assurance to training
 - linking external quality assurance to business goals

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

The skills and knowledge developed in this Unit should reflect the accommodation environment. Where possible, candidates should draw from their own experiences of working in the accommodation sector in a known business environment, or on how implementing what they have learnt could have impact on a known business environment.

Candidates are encouraged to speak to individuals within and, where appropriate, out with their organisation on issues related to this unit.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

It is recommended that this Unit is holistically assessed. The assessment of this Unit could be delivered in two separate assessment tasks, one which tests underpinning knowledge across all outcomes and one which applies that knowledge to a case study or a workplace situation.

Where a case study is used, it should specify; the type of accommodation business (eg guest house, bed and breakfast, hotel, inn with rooms), customer profile, existing grading of the business, location of business (eg urban, rural).

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

When analysing external quality assurance systems and grading criteria candidates could look at VisitScotland's or The AA's star rating schemes.

Online and Distance Learning

This unit could be delivered in a flexible learning environment, such as online, open and or distance learning. Success of the mode of study will depend on the candidate having access to both tradition and online resources.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Core Skills	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Example
Communication				
Oral Communication			x	Working with external agencies regarding the business and both seeking and offering information on a variety of non-standard subject areas. These areas can be diverse in range, and at times, there may be a need to manage conflict and or manage a diverse range of opinions and desired outcomes.
Written Communication (reading)		x		Reading prepared reports from external and internal sources. Content may include both standard and non-standard elements and may require interpretation and application within a known and unknown business environment.

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Communication (cont)				
Written Communication (writing)			x	May include preparing standard operating procedures for the business, in both familiar and unfamiliar areas. Use of exacting explanative, interpretative that is appropriate for the subject and reader. Developing training materials that convey both complex and straightforward messages and meet the exacting nature of brand setting and external evaluation.
Information and Communication Technology				
Accessing Information		x		Use of ICT for the development of training programmes, brand standard reports, the inputting and collation of data and or the provision of accommodation information that may be required.
Providing/Creating Information		x		Information and Communication Technology usage for the inputting and collation of standards of performance data. Preparing grading report on own business and allocating scores and interpretative analysis within a known ICT environment.

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Numeracy				
Using Graphical Information	x			Limited graphical information is apparent within this unit. Simple graphs that show changes in some aspects could be anticipated (ie customer feedback charts) as could information on industry modes.
Using Number	x			Understanding attribution of scoring based upon basic numeric calculation. Interpreting such, and assigning non-numeric descriptors based upon calculation. Scoring will be in familiar situations, however, calculations and attribution may not be. Numeric calculations are averages against industry modes.
Problem Solving				
Critical Thinking			x	Candidates maybe expected to analyse information generated by themselves, and by external third parties. Data needs to be interpreted and both conclusions and actions formulated. Self-evaluation and the ability to critically evaluate all aspects of the business performance should be anticipated.
Planning and Organising			x	Evaluation of the entirety of the business is required for this unit. As is the demonstration of an effective audit. Both activities require planning and execution at a high level.

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Problem Solving (cont)				
Reviewing and Evaluating			x	Interpreting own work and the work of others and being dispassionate about both may be required for this unit. Ability to see areas for improvement is required, as is the ability to make manifest those improvements for self and others to complete.
Working with Others				
Working Co-Operatively with Others			x	Ability to manage conflict and manage expectations not being met may be required for this unit. Furthermore, managing internal management dynamics and ensuring standards are adhered to may be a complex and demanding role.
Reviewing Co-Operative Contribution			x	Interpreting own work and the work of others and being dispassionate about both may be required for this unit. Ability to see areas for improvement is required, as is the ability to make manifest those improvements for self and others to complete.

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

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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

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To support these internal assessments, if accommodation businesses wish to receive a grade from an external body such as the AA or VisitScotland, they can also be assessed against set national quality assurance standards. National quality assurance standards cover a range of different accommodation properties from the smallest bed and breakfast to the largest resort hotels. The standards cover all aspects of the business from the quality and condition of the fixtures and fittings, through to the level of service a guest enjoys. How the business self-assess its quality of provision is vital if the business is to prove successful.

This unit is designed to enable you to:

- 1 Manage brand standards.
- 2 Develop quality assurance systems in the workplace.
- 3 Apply external quality assurance grading criteria to an accommodation operation.

Increasingly within the provision of accommodation, consumers expect a degree of certainty as to what they might expect when they walk through the door of a commercial accommodation provider. Many organisations deal with these expectations by establishing and managing a brand standard for their operation. In addition, a majority of businesses promote their in-house standards by working with external quality assurance bodies like VisitScotland, and the AA to provide the business with nationally recognised grade.

This unit looks at how best you can analyse, develop or manage a brand standard within your business.

The unit also develops knowledge on the issue of how businesses are assessed and graded against external quality assurance grading criteria and how to manage the relationship between the business and an external assessment body to maximise the benefit to the business.

The assessments for this unit will test your underpinning knowledge across all outcomes and also require you to apply your knowledge to case studies or workplace situations.