



PROBLEM SOLVING
SCQF Level 3
SQA Unit Code
F42H 04

WORKPLACE CORE SKILLS UNIT

What are Core Skills?

Core Skills are skills and abilities that everyone needs in their work. This is true for every job in every workplace.

The Core Skills are:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

Employers look for Core Skills when they are appointing new staff. They also expect their existing staff to have these skills.

Core Skills are important because they help you work effectively in your present job and also prepare you for jobs that you will do in future. Developing your Core Skills helps you deal with today's rapidly changing world and improve your career prospects.

What is this Core Skills Unit about?

This Unit is about solving simple problems in the workplace.

It is important to note that the focus of this Unit is about how you deal with problems and not whether the problem was completely solved.

Your assessor will explain anything in this Unit that you do not understand.

What should I know or be able to do before I start this Unit?

You do not need any specific knowledge or experience before starting on this Unit.

It would be useful to be able to show that you have some experience of solving problems in the workplace, for example helping to organise a staff social.

The National Core Skills Unit in Problem Solving at SCQF level 2 or an equivalent qualification provides good preparation for this Unit.

What do I need to do?

You will need to carry out each of the following three tasks.

Task 1: Investigating

Investigate reasons why a simple problem related to your work has arisen. There will be a small number of causes and factors to find out about. To deal with the problem, you will have to carry out a small number of steps, most of which will be things you have done before. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ recognise the main reasons for the problem, situation, or issue, for example:
 - ◆ what are the causes of the problem
 - ◆ why has the situation arisen
 - ◆ who is involved?
- ◆ suggest a way to deal with the problem

Task 2: Planning and solving

Plan, organise, and carry out a simple activity to deal with the problem. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ work out an action plan to deal with the problem, for example:
 - ◆ what are the tasks involved
 - ◆ in which order should the tasks be done
 - ◆ who should do each task
 - ◆ are there any limitations you must work within
 - ◆ do you need permission to carry out any tasks in your action plan?
- ◆ choose and get the resources you will need to carry out your action plan, for example:
 - ◆ equipment
 - ◆ information
 - ◆ money
 - ◆ help from other people
- ◆ carry out your action plan

Task 3: Checking and evaluating

Check how well your approach to the problem-solving activity worked in practice. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ ask your assessor's advice on how to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your problem-solving activity, for example:
 - ◆ did you identify the main reasons for the problem
 - ◆ did the plan run to time
 - ◆ did everyone carry out their allotted tasks
 - ◆ did you allocate enough resources
 - ◆ would something else have worked better?
- ◆ what worked well and what could have been better
- ◆ what you would do in a similar situation in future

How will I show that I have achieved this Unit?

You will need evidence to show that you have achieved all the tasks in this Unit.

Some of the evidence might come from your assessor watching you carrying out some tasks that are part of your problem-solving activity. In addition, your assessor may ask you questions to check your knowledge, understanding, and practical abilities, and make notes or a recording of what was said/done.

You may have video evidence or written evidence, such as notes of discussions with colleagues, the action plan itself, records of activities that you have undertaken, and your thoughts on how well things went.

You must choose one problem-solving activity to show that you can do all three tasks. You are not allowed to gather evidence from different problem-solving activities.

What might be involved?

This Unit may be achieved in many ways. Examples of tasks you might do are:

- ◆ Your line manager thinks that the induction pack provided by your firm could be improved. You are asked to look at the current pack and make suggestions as to what information would be useful for someone newly appointed to a job similar to your own.
- ◆ Customers often supply your firm with the wrong information. You look into this and find out that some of your colleagues send out letters to customers that are not clear. You design a template letter that tells customers exactly what is required.
- ◆ Work out what is needed from the stores for domestic work the next day and make sure the van is loaded safely.

What can I do next?

You could move on to the Problem Solving Core Skills Unit at SCQF level 4.

You could consider doing other Core Skills Units in:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Working with Others

Your assessor can advise you about this.

Guidance for assessors

Further information about delivery, assessment, and evidence requirements for this Unit can be found in the corresponding Assessment Support Pack. In addition, the *Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills* provides further information on assessment.

Disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative competence standards for Units.

Additional advice and guidance for learners with disabilities and/or additional support needs should initially be discussed with the centre where the learner is registered.

If the centre is unable to offer a satisfactory solution then the learner, usually in conjunction with the centre, should contact the External Verifier of the Awarding Body where the learner is registered for certification.

Information on Awarding Body requirements to become an 'approved' Awarding Body is published in the SQA Accreditation *Awarding Body Criteria (2007)*.

http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/AccreditationAwardingBodyCriteria.pdf

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Credit Value

6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 3



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