

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

Unit code: D7LN 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to equip candidates with the skills required to produce a range of business documents to a professional standard.

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

1. Research and produce a formal report
2. Produce a range of business documents

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

SCQF (the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) brings Scottish qualifications into a single framework of 12 levels ranging from SQA Access 1 to doctorates. The SCQF includes degrees; HNC/Ds; SQA National Qualifications; and SVQs. Each SQA Unit is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at a specific level. 1 SCQF point = 10 hours of learning. HN candidates are normally expected to input a further number of hours, matched to the credit value of the Unit, of non-contact time or candidate-led effort to consolidate and reinforce learning.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Since candidates will be expected to research information and produce documentation to a professional standard, it would be helpful if they had good data gathering, research, critical-thinking and communication skills. This may be evidenced by possession of at least one of the following:

- National Unit EE3T 12 (7110055) *Communication (NC)*
- Higher *English and Communication* or its component Units
- Core Skill Communication at Higher
- National Unit EA3A 11 *Practical Writing Skills*
- Core Skill Problem Solving at Intermediate 2

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

Context for delivery: This Unit is included in the framework for a number of HNC and HND awards. If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the context of the particular group award to which it contributes. It may also be delivered discretely.

Higher National Unit specification: General information for centres (cont)

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

Assessment: The assessments for this Unit can be integrated with assessments from other Units. The assessment for Outcome 1 could be integrated with any Outcome which requires the candidate to present research in a formal written report format. The assessment for Outcome 2 could be integrated with any Outcome where assessment involves selecting and producing business documentation formats as described. Both assessments should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work. The first draft for Outcome 2 should be supervised.

An Assessment Exemplar pack for this unit has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

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

Where evidence for an Outcome 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 and produce a formal report

Knowledge and/or skills

- Research skills including use of human, print and electronic source material from both primary and secondary sources
- Selection, analysis and synthesis of information
- Formal business report format and structure
- Systems of numbering and/or lettering used to highlight different elements and sections of the report
- Tone and register appropriate for remit and audience
- Conventions of spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax

Evidence requirements

The candidate will be required to provide evidence in the form of a formal written report produced to professional standards, of not less than 1000 words, which will demonstrate that the candidate is able to:

- research information including use of human, print and electronic source material from both primary and secondary sources
- select, analyse and synthesise information
- use an appropriate format and structure
- present information accurately and coherently
- use tone and register appropriate to remit and audience
- use accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax.

Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome could be integrated with any Unit Outcome which would require candidates to present research in a formal written report format.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

Outcome 2

Produce a range of business documents

Knowledge and/or skills

- Characteristic features of a range of written communication media used in business organisations, including the business letter, memorandum, press release, sales proposal, strategy proposal, pre-formatted accident report and incident report, record of meeting, e-mail
- Advantages and disadvantages of types of written communication used within organisations
- Structure and format of business documents
- Tone and register appropriate for purpose and audience
- Accurate spelling, vocabulary, grammar and syntax

Evidence requirements

The candidate will produce a portfolio of a total of 1000 words of written business documents relating to a complex issue which are clear, concise and grammatically correct. The candidate's response can be judged to be satisfactory when the evidence for each item shows that the candidate is able to:

- select a written format which is suitable for a particular business situation
- use an appropriate tone and register for purpose and audience
- follow accepted business conventions
- use accurate spelling, vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work, with supervision of first drafts. Each candidate must work alone to produce the final documents.

Assessment guidelines

It is essential that the candidate is made aware that any document presented for assessment must be detailed and produced to industry standards. The candidate should be encouraged to word-process the final documents.

This Outcome can be integrated with any other where assessment involves selecting and producing business documentation formats as specified.

Administrative Information

Unit code: D7LN 34

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

Superclass category: AF

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Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50 (minimum order £5.00). Additional copies of the Assessment Exemplar pack can also be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority at a cost of £15.00 each.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit Title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

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

This Unit is intended to develop the skills needed to produce written communication in the format and to the standard required of candidates' chosen vocational areas. It should be related to a context which is familiar to candidates and may be adapted as appropriate to any relevant workplace. Time should be spent on the examination and analysis of a range of current documents to ensure that candidates are able to evaluate advantages and any difficulties associated with the use of a range of conventions, styles and formats. The purpose, readership and remit for each document to be produced should be specified. A range of house-styles and formats may be used in industry, and it will be beneficial if centres liaise with local organisations to ensure that materials are appropriate to and in line with current preferred practice.

Simple texts on an uncomplicated issue – such as a simple request – would not produce sufficient evidence for Outcome 2, although candidates should be encouraged to express complex ideas directly and coherently and in the most effective way to achieve intended purpose. The effect of the presentation of text on the intended reader is important, and use of word-processing, attention to layout and other details should be emphasised and encouraged. The style may be in keeping with the vocational area, but any apparent informality should be created with skill. Technical accuracy is crucial.

If the Unit is offered discretely, documents should be relevant to the vocational interests of the candidate. Workplace documents produced by the candidate may be considered for assessment if authenticated, but some supervised production to a specific remit is also advisable.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

There are opportunities for integration with other Unit Outcomes although care must be taken that evidence requirements for all Outcomes to be assessed have been taken into account and explained to the candidate.

Open learning

This Unit lends itself to flexible learning approaches, such as online or open/distance learning with tutor input and support at all stages of draft and centre devised supervision agreements to ensure conditions for authenticity.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 – publication code A1030).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

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 and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs and Candidates for whom English is an Additional Language* (SQA, 2000).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Communication: Business Writing Skills

This Unit is designed to enable you to research for and produce accurate and structured documents in recognised formats.

You will be expected to produce a well-researched, formal report to an acceptable business standard, and produce to industry standards three other business documents which relate to a complex issue.

You will be expected to show evidence of data gathering, research skills and the ability to think critically.

All documentation must be technically accurate in spelling, punctuation and sentence construction and must be produced in an appropriate format.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Research and produce a formal report
2. Produce a range of business documents