

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Unit code: D7XY 35

Unit purpose: The Unit is about enabling the candidate to acquire the skills required by a Public Relations practitioner to analyse, plan, design and produce relevant materials for a Public Relations campaign and to implement a Public Relations campaign. It is a specialist Unit, primarily intended for candidates who intend entering the communications industry.

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

1. Produce Public Relations materials for a specific organisation
2. Describe the key elements of a Public Relations campaign
3. Produce a detailed Public Relations campaign to a specific brief
4. Evaluate the role of Public Relations in crisis management

Credit value: 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

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: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, but it would be beneficial if the candidate had possession of HN Unit D7M8 34 *Public Relations 1: Functions and Applications*, or similar qualifications or experience.

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: 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.

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

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Assessment: While a range of assessment methods could be used, the subject lends itself to a holistic assessment and a campaign project is recommended. This would involve a folio of written evidence, a model campaign and an oral presentation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

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

Produce Public Relations materials for a specific organisation

Knowledge and/or skills

- Production of press releases to reflect purpose and target audience
- Magazine feature writing to meet Public Relations objectives
- Design of leaflets
- Public Relations literature
- Client relationships
- Production of mail shots

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need to demonstrate his/her skills by showing that he/she can:

- produce press releases
- produce feature articles for a general interest magazine
- create a publicity leaflet that fulfils the objectives of a Public Relations campaign
- devise a mail shot strategy consisting of a written plan that states the purpose, publics and the intended outcome
- produce printed materials for a target mailing list.

Evidence will take the form of a folio of written materials produced to a standard acceptable in the communication industries.

Assessment guidelines

It is possible to integrate this Outcome with Outcome 3. The material produced could support the detailed Public Relations campaign of Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Outcome 2

Describe the key elements of a Public Relations campaign

Knowledge and/or skills

- Rudiments of Public Relations campaigns
- The key elements in planning press conferences and media briefings
- The use, purpose and suitability for a particular Public Relations purpose, of facility visits, exhibitions and promotional events
- The benefits of sponsorship
- Awareness of client needs

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- demonstrate understanding of a six point campaign plan
- explain the key elements in planning press conferences and media briefings
- explain the use and suitability for a particular public relations purpose, of facility visits, exhibitions and promotional events
- explain the appropriate application and benefits of sponsorship, with reference to a particular sponsor.

Written evidence should be presented as responses to structured questions.

Assessment guidelines

It is advisable to complete Outcome 2 before undertaking Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Produce a detailed Public Relations campaign to a specific brief

Knowledge and/or skills

- Communications audits
- Campaign objectives
- Preparation of campaign budgets
- Defining and ranking publics
- Preparation of campaign plans
- Choice of media
- Monitoring and evaluating campaigns

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by producing a campaign plan which shows that he/she can:

- conduct a comprehensive and accurate communications audit
- select relevant and realistic campaign objectives
- prepare a campaign budget consistent with available data
- accurately define and correctly rank target publics in line with overall objective
- select appropriate media
- devise effective monitoring and evaluating methods.

The campaign plan will be detailed and coherent and will take the form of a written folio of evidence which may include, where a holistic approach is followed, the evidence required from the other Outcomes. The monitoring system would involve a measure of response such as newspaper column inches or some measurement of public response, for example, a petition or an information request form. The written evidence will be a minimum of 1500 words and may be supported by oral evidence.

Assessment guidelines

An assignment covering Outcomes 1 and 3 is recommended. The folio for Outcome 1 should contain the print material. The candidate will design and implement a Public Relations campaign project. It will incorporate where appropriate, the elements of Outcomes 1 and 3 but it will include a written plan that will contain a campaign budget strategy, principal concepts and identification of target publics.

Outcome 4

Evaluate the role of Public Relations in crisis management

Knowledge and/or skills

- Strengths and weaknesses of Public Relations strategies
- Potential conflict between Public Relations personnel and the media during an emergency
- The crisis management training needs for internal Public Relations staff

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- analyse an example of a specific crisis, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the adopted strategy, whether conflict with the media occurred, how it was dealt with and what impact the events had on future strategy and staff training

- evaluate the strategy adopted and justify conclusions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Evidence will be a minimum of 800 words and an oral presentation of a minimum of five minutes supported by audio visual aids.

Assessment guidelines

Ideally the candidate should analyse a recent real life case but it is acceptable to use a well constructed case study.

This Outcome may be incorporated into a holistic assessment in the form of a risk assessment document. To achieve the required coverage of evidence requirements, however, would involve very careful choice of the campaign objectives.

Administrative Information

Unit code: D7XY 35

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Superclass category: BA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is based on the specific function of a Public Relations manager working in a corporate communication context. It encourages candidates to apply creatively the theory of Public Relations and in particular to demonstrate the ability to analyse, plan, monitor and evaluate.

The Unit addresses Public Relations in a corporate strategic context, not as a promotional tool to support the marketing mix.

This Unit simulates the job role of a Public Relations manager most successfully if tackled holistically. A Public Relations manager is required to analyse an organisation's situation, create a strategy, set measurable objectives and to deliver tactically.

Candidates should look at the key publics for a campaign, the best choice of media, realistic budgets and how the campaign could be evaluated.

The ability to analyse an organisation's current image and communications output and to devise methods of monitoring and evaluating a campaign are crucial to Public Relations management jobs.

Candidates need to be aware of changes in the industry generated by advancing technology. Online journals are increasingly popular. Candidates should be able to use not only an organisation's website but also the whole of the Internet as a Public Relations tool.

A variety of forms of sponsorship should be considered such as commercial partnerships and one-off goodwill gestures in the community.

Candidates should show awareness of the development of contingency plans from effective analysis. Contingency plans are multi-disciplinary, but all roles play a part in the reputation of an organisation.

The crisis evaluation should look at what impact every interface with the public has on reputation. The use of the website and the monitoring of other websites should be considered.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and implementing Public Relations Campaigns

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Candidates should spend considerable effort analysing the situation of an organisation, real or imagined, ensuring that all other evidence requirements can be met from a realistic plan.

The objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Budgets need to be up-to-date and candidates may need to spend some time researching costs. Publics need to be clearly defined in order to select appropriate media. Candidates should be aware of business-to-business relations and the influence of the trade press and trade bodies. Outcome 4 could also be addressed as part of the same project and delivered as risk assessment and the framework of a contingency plan.

To undertake Outcome 1 candidates require well-developed writing skills. Candidates need to demonstrate an understanding of news and news values and demonstrate that they can write a news release which follows journalistic conventions. Candidates should also demonstrate an understanding of feature articles and typical feature writing styles and openings.

In designing a leaflet, candidates should demonstrate the use of precise, clear language and an understanding of identity, colour, font and design.

Mail shots need to be carefully targeted and consistency in tone as well as identity and layout should be achieved. Leaflets, press releases, mail shots and feature articles should also be considered in relation to electronic media.

In Outcome 2 press conferences and media briefings should be regarded as two different tactics used for specific circumstances. Facility visits should be approached with changing work patterns in mind.

Exhibitions should be considered for business-to-business communications as well as consumer communications.

Candidates should consider sponsorship as a commercial partnership for big businesses as well as an inexpensive tool for building community relations.

Websites, DVDs, e-mail and CD Roms should all be considered in the choice of media.

Monitoring and evaluation is of growing importance in commercial Public Relations activity. Candidates must be able to identify key messages in press articles, monitor use of electronic media and show an understanding of broadcast monitoring services.

Evaluation may also involve attitude research to assess activity in terms of the Public Relations transfer process.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Public Relations 2: Planning and implementing Public Relations Campaigns

For Outcome 4 candidates should consider a high profile event in order to analyse crisis management. Legal implications should also be considered if appropriate.

Open learning

Given the specialised nature of this Unit and its focus on practical skills as well as analytical thinking, an open learning approach may be difficult. Planning and writing skills need to be practised and reinforced. There is a need for examples of work in this Unit, and this may have implications for copyright.

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

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: Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns

This Unit builds on the knowledge gained and the ideas developed during the study of HN Unit D7M8 34 *Public Relations 1: Functions and Applications*. HN Unit D7XY 35 *Public Relations 2: Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns* is a specialist Unit which looks at the theoretical ideas of Public Relations and applies them to real life situations and actual organisations.

For Outcome 1 you will be asked to examine and produce Public Relations materials such as press releases, magazine promotional features, leaflets and mail shots. The materials will be for specific Public Relations objectives.

The key elements of Public Relations campaigns, covering such topics as press conferences and media briefings, facility visits, exhibitions, promotional events, and the application and benefits of sponsorship will be studied in Outcome 2.

In Outcome 3 you will produce a detailed Public Relations campaign to a specific brief, covering a communications audit, campaign objectives, budget, publics, PR literature (possibly covered by your work for Outcome 1), campaign schedule and monitoring plan.

For Outcome 4 you will evaluate the role of Public Relations in a crisis situation, covering the strengths and weaknesses of strategy used, potential conflict between Public Relations and the Media, and the crisis management training needs identified for internal PR staff.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

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4. Evaluate the role of Public Relations in crisis management