Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Business Information Management

Unit code: DE1Y 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to recognise the importance of information in business for gaining competitive advantage. It examines the technologies involved in supporting the effective provision, management and communication of business information. The Unit is relevant for candidates who envisage a career in business, with a particular focus on information management

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

1 Evaluate the role of information in business.
2 Evaluate information systems within an organisation.
3 Evaluate the impact of emerging information and communication technologies on competitive advantage.

Credit value: 1 HN 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 points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the Centre. However it would be beneficial if the candidate had achieved the HN Units
- Office Administration   (DE1P 34)
- Office Technologies   (DE1R 34)
- IT in Business – Databases (DE1N 34)

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 to be 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. This Unit is included as mandatory in the framework of the HND Administration and Information Technology.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: Evidence for this Unit should be generated through assessment undertaken in open book controlled conditions

The assessment for each Outcome will be by means of a case study which candidates will have access to prior to assessment. The knowledge and/or skills for each Outcome will be contained within the case study and questions will be altered for each assessment event.

Alternatively, separate case studies may be used for each Outcome or a combination of Outcomes.

An Assessment Exemplar has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF Level 8.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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Unit code: DE1Y 35

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

Evaluate the role of information in business

Knowledge and/or skills

- Information as a key business resource in the competitive environment
- Types, nature, sources, forms and desirable characteristics of information
- Information requirements of different functions and levels of management
- Flow of information within the organisation
- Comparison of methods of communication
- Recognise that the management of information is important enough to warrant an information strategy and that this must support the overall business plan

Evidence requirements

The candidate will be required to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by the production of a response of approximately 500 words derived from a case study or actual workplace situation which covers all knowledge and/or skills items.

Evidence will be presented to show that the candidate can evaluate the role of information in business based on a sample of 2 of the 6 knowledge and/or skills items above, and will be conducted under open book controlled conditions.

Assessment guidelines

Assessment should be by means of a case study which samples 2 from the 6 knowledge and/or skills areas. The case study may be given to the candidate prior to the assessment event but the questions must be distributed on the day of the event and changed for each assessment occasion.

Where a case study is used as part of the assessment, it should relate to an organisation relevant to the group award. Where a workplace situation is used, care should be taken to ensure that it would provide candidates with sufficient opportunity to meet the evidence requirements of the Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Business Information Management

Outcome 2

Evaluate information systems within an organisation.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Effective storage methodologies and management of information
- Critical role of functional and management information systems in contributing towards business objectives
- Issues impacting on information systems

Evidence requirements

The candidate will be required to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome on a sample basis. The sample should be derived from a case study or actual workplace situation which covers all knowledge and/or skills items. Evidence will be presented as a response of approximately 500 words and has to show that the candidate can evaluate information systems within an organisation based on a sample of 2 of the 3 knowledge and/or skills items above. Candidates must provide a satisfactory response to both items. The assessment will be carried out under open book controlled conditions.

Assessment guidelines

Assessment should be by means of a case study which samples 2 of the 3 knowledge and/or skills areas. The case study may be given to the candidates prior to the assessment event but the questions must be distributed on the day of the event and changed for each assessment occasion.

Where a case study is used as part of the assessment, it should relate to an organisation relevant to the group award. Where a workplace situation is used, care should be taken to ensure that it would provide candidates with sufficient opportunity to meet the evidence requirements of the Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Business Information Management

Outcome 3

Evaluate the impact of emerging information and communication technologies on competitive advantage.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Business applications of web based technologies to enhance competitiveness, including Internet, intranet and extranet
- Risk assessment of the storage and communication of e-information
- Company procedures and legal requirements to ensure e-information integrity, confidentiality and security

Evidence requirements

The candidate will be required to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome on a sample basis. The sample should be derived from a case study or actual workplace situation that covers all knowledge and/or skills items. Evidence will be presented as a response of approximately 500 words and has to show that the candidate can analyse the impact of emerging information and communication technologies on competitive advantage based on a sample of 2 of the 3 knowledge and/or skills items above. Candidates must provide a satisfactory response to both items, under open book controlled conditions.

Assessment guidelines

Assessment should be my means of a case study which samples 2 of the 3 knowledge and/or skills areas. The case study may be given to the candidates prior to the assessment event but the questions must be distributed on the day of the event and changed for each assessment occasion.

Where a case study is used as part of the assessment, it should relate to an organisation relevant to the group award. Where a workplace situation is used, care should be taken to ensure that it would provide candidates with sufficient opportunity to meet the evidence requirements of the Unit.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DE1Y 35

Unit title: Business Information Management

Superclass category: CY

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: DE1Y 35

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 core to the delivery of the group award.

The content of this Unit will raise candidates' awareness of the critical role of information within organisations in today's competitive environment.   The Unit is about ensuring an understanding of the different types of computer based information systems available to support the successful management of this information (existing and emerging) to ensure effective communication of business information.   The Unit will raise awareness that the integration of information systems, networks and Internet technologies form the basis of today's and tomorrow's digital firm.   Reference will also be made to the regulatory and legal requirements which ensure the security and confidentiality of business information.

Although this Unit is expressed in generic terms, it should be related to a context that is familiar to candidates.

Outcome 1

- Desirable information attributes (timeliness, detail, cost, relevance, legality, communication to right target, etc)
- Information as a key resource in today's competitive environment
- Different types, nature, sources and forms of information
- Information required for decision making, planning/coordinating and control
- Information requirements of different levels of management (strategic, tactical and operational and emerging levels ie knowledge)
- Information flow (levels of management; different organisation functions; and to/from external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, shareholders, etc)
- Comparison of methods of communication (oral, written, visual, electronic)
- Importance of information strategy (competitive advantage, support for overall business strategy)

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: DE1Y 35

Outcome 2

- Significance of company database(s) (basis for functional and management information systems)
- Storage methodologies (data warehousing, data mining)
- Integration of functional and management information systems (transaction processing, office support, knowledge based/expert, management information, decision support, executive support)
- Customer relation management systems, supply chain systems
- Matching information systems to the changing needs of the organisation
- Issues impacting on information systems (type/size/structure of company, social and ethical values, technology available, customers/markets, competition, globalisation, etc)
- Effect of new information systems on structure of organisations (e-business, e-learning, e-commerce)

Outcome 3

- Business applications of web based technologies to enhance competitiveness, including Internet, Intranet and Extranet (Internet for e-commerce, intranet and extranet for e-business, different forms of ICT used for communication)
- Use of these technologies for communicating, learning, sharing (hardware, software and information), transferring files, collaborating, internal operations, on-line trading
- Integration of information systems, networks and web technologies to gain competitive advantage (enhanced business growth, closer links internally and externally, improved information flow and decision making, increased management control, increased responsiveness, improved service/product, added valued, enhanced customer relations, etc)
- Risk assessment of the storage and communication of e-information (access controls, technical maintenance and back-up systems, operator training/supervision, data validation, encryption, anti-virus software, firewalls, disaster recovery plan, etc)
- Company procedures and legal requirements to ensure e-information integrity, confidentiality and security (Data Protection/Copyright/Computer Misuse Act, Privacy Laws, Disability Discrimination Act: Technology, Electronic Communications Bill, European Union's Electronic Commerce Directive, BS7799 and any relevant emerging legislation)

Please note that examples are given for guidance and should not be considered as an exhaustive list.

In Outcomes 2 and 3 the emphasis should be on uses and benefits of Internet technologies for company and customers, rather than an in-depth look at the technologies involved.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: DE1Y 35

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

It is recommended that Centres facilitate hands-on experience for the candidates as far as is possible and encourage visits to local organisations to enable candidates to gain a practical insight into concepts taught throughout the Unit. In addition, or alternatively, delivery and assessment should ideally be linked to real life case studies.

Candidates should understand that information is a key resource for any company in today's competitive environment.

They should be able to examine the critical role of electronic information systems and how they can be effectively used within/across the different organisational functions and levels of management. Candidates should be made aware that information systems are seen as a strategic resource, and that they have an important impact on key operations which determine the livelihood of the organisation.

The Unit also examines the applications of Web technology in the provision and communication of business information and resulting impact on competitive advantage. It will also be important to highlight procedures for ensuring information security, including legal and regulatory requirements.

Open learning

All Outcomes are appropriate to Open and Flexible Learning approaches with Tutor support at all stages. Delivering centres will be responsible for ensuring authenticity of candidate's work. For further information and advice please refer to 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 Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Business Information Management

This Unit is designed to prepare you for a career in administration where information management is central to operations. The Unit will also be appropriate for those students who intend to progress to higher-level courses that offer Strategic Management Information Systems as an element of the course.

In Outcome 1 you will look at the importance of the role of information in business and its use as a strategic resource in gaining competitive advantage. You will learn about the importance of aligning information strategy with business objectives. You will also gain an appreciation of the information requirements at each level of management and different functional areas within an organisation. This Outcome sets the scene for Outcomes 2 and 3.

In Outcome 2 you will learn about the variety of information systems, both functional and management, in an organisation. You will appreciate the benefits the systems provide and be able to distinguish between the characteristics and suitability for purpose of each information system.

In Outcome 3 you will gain an appreciation of the importance of emerging and existing information and communications technology. You will learn about the importance of networking within and beyond the organisation. You will look at the benefits and barriers to connectivity and the implications for organisations. You will learn about the security requirements this new technology brings and also appreciate the need for different pieces of legislation in this fast developing area.

Overall, you will be expected to apply the knowledge gained to assess the importance of information, information systems and information communications technology to an organisation.