Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Managing Information

Unit code: DV84 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to develop the candidate's skills required to use and evaluate Management Information Systems effectively within organisations. It will also enable them to recognise the importance of information for management actions and to take account of relevant factors in information management including legal and ethical issues.

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

1 Evaluate the role of information for management purposes.
2 Explain the elements of information management.
3 Evaluate a Management Information System within an organisation

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

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 Access 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is recommended that candidates undertaking this Unit should possess good communication skills.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Information Technology and Numeracy at SCQF level 6 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.

Assessment: A holistic approach may be taken to the assessment of all three Outcomes. This may be carried out with the use of a case study scenario of an organisation or it may be assessed by candidates conducting an investigation into an information-based topic within their own work environment. In either case, the result will be that candidates will produce a portfolio of evidence for assessment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Managing Information

Unit code: DV84 34

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 for management purposes

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Types, sources and characteristics of information
♦ Levels of information
♦ Information requirements of different functions
♦ Transfer of information within organisations
♦ Importance of information in decision-making

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate all knowledge and/or skills items by showing that they can, for three decisions made by managers at three different management levels:

♦ collect appropriate qualitative and quantitative information that is accurate, relevant, suitable and timely and from reliable sources
♦ evaluate the types of information that are transferred between three organisational functions and the three management levels
♦ evaluate the importance of information in making these decisions

Assessment guidelines

All Outcomes can be assessed by one integrated instrument of assessment. The Assessment Guidelines following Outcome 3 give further details.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing Information

Outcome 2

Explain the elements of information management

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Collection, recording, storage and retrieval of information
♦ Analysis and interpretation of information
♦ Presentation and communication of information.
♦ Information policies meeting security, confidentiality and legal requirements

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate all knowledge and/or skills items by showing that they can, for a given situation:

♦ explain collecting, recording, storing, retrieving, analysing, interpreting, presenting and communicating information that is accurate, suitable, relevant and timely
♦ explain how and why the above information complies with organisational policies, ie security and confidentiality and with legal requirements

Assessment guidelines

All Outcomes can be assessed by one integrated instrument of assessment. The Assessment Guidelines following Outcome 3 give further details.

Outcome 3

Evaluate a Management Information System within an organisation

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Types of Management Information Systems
♦ Identification of information requirements of users
♦ Identification of criteria to be met by a Management Information System
♦ Monitoring a Management Information System
♦ Evaluation of a Management Information System
♦ Identification of opportunities to improve a Management Information System

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to meet all knowledge and/or skills items by showing that, for a given Management Information System, they can:

♦ assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Management Information System with respect to the extent to which it meets user requirements and how well it meets the criteria set for it
♦ monitor and evaluate the Management Information System
♦ suggest possible improvements to the Management Information System

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing Information

Assessment guidelines

All Outcomes can be assessed by one integrated instrument of assessment. A holistic approach can be taken to the assessment of all three Outcomes. A single instrument of assessment based on a case study scenario of an organisation can be used but, ideally, the candidate may be assessed by a critical analysis of the Management Information System within the candidate's own work environment.

Candidates could analyse a company-wide Management Information System or a part of it, eg the way that it operates within a department, or for a particular product or service. They could investigate how the Management Information System copes with changes to user requirements, perhaps in response to changes in the market. They could also investigate the use of information processing technology — advantages and disadvantages — in respect of the Management Information System.

The candidate may provide a portfolio of evidence based on the Management Information Systems in place within their own work environment or case study provided by the centre.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DV84 34

Unit title: Managing Information

Superclass category: CY

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Managing Information

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 an optional Unit within the HNC Management Group Award, which is designed to provide candidates with knowledge in the field of Management. The Unit is designed to enable the candidate to evaluate the effectiveness of Management Information Systems within an organisation and understand the importance of information to the making of decisions. Reference will be made to regulatory and legal requirements that ensure the security and confidentiality of business-related information.

In Outcome 1, candidates will need to know about:

♦ different types of information, eg qualitative and quantitative
♦ Possible sources of information, eg internal, external, secondary sources, primary sources
♦ Desirable characteristics of information, eg accuracy, relevance, suitability, timeliness, cost, etc
♦ Levels of information, ie strategic, tactical, operational
♦ Information requirements of different functions, eg finance, sales and marketing, human resources, production, distribution, design, research and development, purchasing
♦ Transfer of information between different functions, eg identify interfaces between 2 functions and identify the information necessary to ensure smooth interaction
♦ Transfer of information between different management levels, eg policies from top-down, reports from bottom-up
♦ The importance of information in decision-making

In Outcome 2, candidates will need to know about:

♦ Methods of collecting information, eg desk research, interview, questionnaires, observation
♦ Methods of recording information, eg minutes of meetings, checklists, check sheets, data sheets, flowcharts, tables, charts
♦ Methods of storing information, eg paper-based, computer-based
♦ Methods of retrieval of information, eg access rights, classification of information - alphabetical, chronological, etc
♦ Analysis of information, eg qualitative, quantitative, statistical, trends, patterns
♦ Interpretation of information, eg objectivity, subjectivity, elimination of bias
♦ Presentation of information, eg written letter, memo, report, oral presentation, meetings
♦ Communication of information, eg choice of media
♦ Organisational policies, eg confidentiality, dissemination of information
♦ Legal requirements, eg Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Computer Misuse Acts, Copyright

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Information

In Outcome 3, candidates will need to know about:

♦ different Management Information Systems, eg accounting and payroll, stock control, transaction processing, decision support, executive support, customer liaison and feedback,
♦ information requirements of users, ie identify who will use or be affected by the Management Information System and define their current and likely future requirements
♦ based on the user requirements, identify the criteria to be met by the Management Information System, eg relevance, accuracy, completeness, timeliness, cost, legality, ethical issues
♦ methods for monitoring and evaluating a Management Information System, eg qualitative, quantitative, planning and budgeting methods
♦ opportunities to improve a Management Information System, eg new information systems such as e–business or e–commerce, changing needs of the organisation, issues impacting on information systems such as globalisation, social and ethical values, technology available

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

It is recommended that Centres facilitate hands-on experience for the candidates as far as possible. Candidates should be encouraged to make contact with managers in their own work environment to research both the Management Information System in that organisation and/or information topics appropriate to each of the Outcomes.

Teaching should be supported with relevant textbooks and case studies and talks by information managers of local organisations. It is anticipated that this Unit may be delivered to candidates with a variety of industrial backgrounds and, wherever possible, teaching should be slanted towards their individual needs.

In Outcome 1, candidates should be encouraged to identify the decisions to be made by managers. In Outcome 2 and 3, they should be encouraged to identify an appropriate situation and Management Information System. It is possible to link Outcomes 2 and 3. This would require candidates to access information at a strategic level. This will improve the candidate's research and networking skills and should raise their profile in their work environment.

If it is not possible for candidate's to access necessary information within their own work environment, then the centre should provide case study material.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop Core Skills of Communication, Numeracy and Information Technology at SCQF level 6 in this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Information

Although skills in Communication, Using Number and Graphic Communication are not formally assessed, accuracy of analysis, interpretation and the ability to calculate and present complex data underpins the competencies developed in the Unit. Candidates will develop advanced skills in the understanding and use of Information Technology as they manage the practical aspects of researching data and information systems. Skills in accessing and evaluating electronic sources which provide a range of current facts and ideas will be enhanced as candidates read in depth and in detail materials from a range of sources, including Internet sites, electronic databases and journal archives. Proposing improvements to a Management Information System will require an understanding of information systems such as e-business or e-commerce, and of issues impacting on information systems such as globalisation, social and ethical values and current technology.

Candidates should be provided with formative opportunities to enhance skills in the interpretation of numerical, statistical and graphic data as they undertake the Unit. Accuracy in sustained complex calculations and effective presentation of data could be supported by access to appropriate technology. Support materials and software could be useful for candidates as they interpret numerical and graphical information which goes beyond simply extracting information and includes interpreting and working with quantitive and qualitative data, interpolation and extrapolation.

Candidates should be advised on the effective and responsible use of equipment and software applications, and they should be familiar with methods for keeping all their own data secure and well organised. They should be aware of the importance of saving and performing back ups. The need to develop efficient systems of recording, coding and storing outline information for ease of reference, such as logs, diaries, and notes folders would be emphasised

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning methods. Additional planning and resources may be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 — publication code A1030)

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs,* which is available on SQA's website: **www.sqa.org.uk**.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Managing Information

This Unit is a one credit Unit at SCQF level 7. You will benefit greatly if you can secure the co-operation of an employer with regards to access to information and their Management Information Systems.

This Unit is designed to develop those managerial skills that will enable you to use Management Information Systems effectively. Upon successful completion of this Unit you will be able to access and collect relevant information, record, analyse, interpret, present, communicate, store and retrieve relevant information. You will understand the importance of information to an organisation and be able to critically evaluate a Management Information System. During your study of this Unit, your communication skills will be developed. Your research skills should improve, your ability to work with others should improve and you should raise your profile in your work environment.

The Unit has three Outcomes.

In **Outcome 1** you will learn to recognise different types, sources, characteristics and levels of information. You will be able to identify the information requirements of different departments and management levels and also the types of information that are transferred between departments and management levels. You will also understand the importance of information to an organisation.

In **Outcome 2** you will learn how to collect, record, store, retrieve, analyse, interpret, present and communicate information that is accurate, suitable, relevant and timely. You will also understand the importance of compliance with organisational policies, such as confidentiality, and with legal requirements such as the Data Protection Act.

In **Outcome 3** you will study Management Information Systems, identifying users and their requirements, criteria to be met by the Management Information System, methods for monitoring and evaluation and improvements to a Management Information System.

The content of the Unit will be made relevant through the use of appropriate examples and case study materials.

For successful completion of this Unit, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on the assessment work. This is likely to be along the lines of the production of a portfolio of evidence based on the Management Information Systems in place within your own work environment or case study provided by the centre.