Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Managing Knowledge

Unit code: DV85 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enhance the candidates' understanding of knowledge management and how an organisation can create, capture and share knowledge within a competitive business environment to achieve sustained competitive advantage.

It also enables candidates to assess knowledge management within an organisation.

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

1   Explain the importance of knowledge management.
2   Analyse the knowledge management environment.

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 possess good written or verbal communication skills, together with a knowledge of management and business principles as well as a general appreciation of organisations in general. This may be evidenced by possession of the HN Units 'Management: Leadership at Work' (DV88 34) or 'Managing Information' (DV84 34) or an equivalent Unit(s) covering these knowledge and skills areas.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Problem Solving and Information Technology 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.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: The assessment could take the form of open-book assessments with structured questions or a project based on an organisation where managing knowledge has affected business performance.

It would be possible, if preferred, to set more than one instrument of assessment. Outcome 2, for example, may be assessed separately using open-book structured questions linked to the Evidence Requirements.

A holistic approach may be taken to the assessment of both outcomes where a single instrument of assessment based on one organisation can be used. In this case candidates should be provided with, or directed to, information about an organisation and its environment. If the candidate is directed to gather information, the research should ideally be based on an organisation that the candidate is familiar with, or one about which the candidate can easily gather data. Candidates who have current or past work experience may be able to use this organisation for their assessment.

The nature of this assessment is such that candidates should be encouraged to research their chosen organisation to further understand the impact that managing knowledge has had on it. This may include sections of:

♦ definition of knowledge management
♦ components of knowledge management
♦ importance of knowledge management to an organisation
♦ organisational issues associated with adoption and collation of knowledge

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Managing Knowledge

Unit code: DV85 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

Explain the importance of knowledge management

Knowledge and/or skills

♦   Relationship between data, information and knowledge
♦   Components of Knowledge Management
♦   Impact of organisational factors — values, culture and behaviour on knowledge management
♦   Knowledge Management and the business environment

Evidence Requirements

Within the context of a particular organisation and making use of relevant knowledge management concepts, candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that they can meet all knowledge and/or skills items by showing that they can:

♦   explain how the core elements of data, information and knowledge are inter-linked.
♦   explain the difference between tacit and explicit knowledge, and the difficulties of how to capture and collate them.
♦   explain the basic components of knowledge management making reference to one key writer
♦   explain four business environment factors that make knowledge management a purposeful management tool
♦   explain the relationship between organisational values, culture and behaviour and access to information

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome can be assessed by using structured questions or an organisationally-based project to cover all areas of the Outcome.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing Knowledge

Outcome 2

Analyse the knowledge management environment

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Creation and sharing of knowledge
♦ Techniques for measuring the success or failure of managing knowledge
♦ Results of managing knowledge

Evidence Requirements

Within the context of a particular organisation and making use of relevant knowledge management concepts, candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that they can meet all knowledge and/or skills items by showing that they can:

♦ explain how two human and two non-human forms of creating knowledge contribute to knowledge sharing
♦ analyse the importance of the correct conditions, means and actions for the knowledge environment in terms of organisational systems, tools, processes and actions
♦ analyse two techniques to measure success or failure of knowledge management
♦ explain the added value created through development of a knowledge environment
♦ explain and justify two areas where managing knowledge makes a positive contribution

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome can be assessed by using structured questions or an organisationally-based project to cover all areas of the Outcome.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DV85 34

Unit title: Managing Knowledge

Superclass category: CD

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Managing Knowledge

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

The Unit is an optional unit for the HNC in Management Group Award. This HNC is designed to provide candidates with knowledge of Management concepts, principles and practice.

The Unit highlights the dynamic and ever changing business environment and the role that managing knowledge can play in sustaining a competitive advantage for organisations. It looks at techniques and practices for knowledge creation and management within organisations. The unit also considers measurements and methods of managing knowledge.

It is designed to:

♦ enhance the candidates understanding of the development of knowledge management concepts in relation to business processes and performance
♦ enhance the candidate's ability to identify and explain knowledge management in an organisation

There are a large number of consultants and theorists that can be used to illustrate the content of this Unit and to explain and analyse the situation in a particular organisation. The following gives some guidance on suitable content. It is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

Outcome 1

Candidates are asked to refer to a particular organisation, which may be for example public, private, non-government, manufacturing, or service organisations.

Candidates need to show the relationship between data, information and knowledge. This could be for example from a value or process perspective. Where data is a basic commodity of unorganised observations, numbers, words or images and where value is added whilst being processed (organised or grouped) into information (purpose or meaning), further process makes it knowledge (information plus experience, content, interpretation and reflection).

There are many key writers who have written over a substantial period of time and some of the more significant would be Argyris, Senge, Nonaka and Takeuchi, Levitt and March, Schein. They mainly reflect on two schools of thought: first generation who focus on improving knowledge sharing and compliance based solely on technology and second generation who focus on improving processes for creating new knowledge (keeping competitive advantage). There are others for consideration who have written and compared for many years including: Edvinsson, Shulka and Srinivasan and Wiig.

There are many components of knowledge management and broadly fall into categories of:

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Enablers — such as knowledge champions, structure, culture, vision, environment, strategy
Levers — including the processes, people, measurement, information required to help knowledge flow between the organisation, practice
Foundation — including the infrastructure (ICT), tools and techniques to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours of the staff, method

Knowledge management has components including: creating, gathering, organising, disseminating, knowledge teams, knowledge bases, intranet portal, sharing schemes, collaboration, transfer, explicit and tacit.

Candidates have many key writers to make reference to when discussing components and they would choose an appropriate one for their chosen organisation.

Value relates to mission statements, objectives, organisational practices, jargon, symbols, rituals and routines. Culture could include those suggested by Handy, Deal and Kennedy and Holfstede. Consideration could be given to organisational: communication, participation, involvement, support or individual knowledge. Key issue for knowledge management is the creation of a supportive, collaborative culture.

Factors making knowledge management a useful management tool for today's business include: downsizing, portfolio careers, change, globalisation and the changing economic of markets and industries. Other organisational factors impacting could include: organisational wealth gained from knowledge, organisational technology improvements and innovation, importance of organisational learning and the need to achieve knowledge business objectives.

Outcome 2

There are many examples of what can be termed creation of knowledge management activities including: induction packs, building databases, establishing corporate libraries, building intranets, sharing best practice, installing groupware, leading training programmes, leading cultural change, fostering collaboration, creating virtual organisations, exit interviews, networking, meetings, filing cabinets and telephone conferencing are but a few of the alternatives here. Candidates should recognise the crucial element here is the ability to apply these to an organisation.

Candidates should be able to link the creation of the correct condition to *correct culture for the plans*, correct means to *systems, tools and processes* and correct actions to *people instinctively share and apply experience and best practice*. Organisational examples of this may include the adoption or usage of: after action reviews (learning before, during and after), communities of practice, learning champions, knowledge audits, exit interviews and knowledge harvesting.

Candidates are expected to be able to give clear and relevant examples of the value created to the organisation or business unit/function by utilising the above issues or tactics.

There are many areas to consider in terms of contribution: organisational efficiency and effectiveness, increased staff motivation and morale and improved competitive advantage. Direct contributions could be for example: better and faster decision-making, increased empowerment and faster learning.

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Possible techniques to measure success can include: balanced scorecard, benchmarking, ROI, employee surveys, achievement of goals, value creation of intellectual capital.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The Unit aims to merge theory and practice with the focus being on the practical aspects of managing knowledge for the benefits of sustained competitive advantage. This should be backed up with a broad understanding of the management theory in these areas.

It is envisaged that the Unit will be delivered through lecturer-mediated discussion, the provision of appropriate examples and case studies, and by reading appropriate management texts. The appropriate use of examples can help to keep the Unit relevant to candidates especially if they relate to organisations with which they are familiar.

Candidates should also be encouraged to relate theory and practice at all times. They should be encouraged to apply appropriate models and draw conclusions from this. The conclusions will cover the value of the theoretical approach and comment on the behaviour undertaken in terms of strengths and weaknesses. In this way candidates can develop their analytical skills whilst adopting good habits of substantiated reasoned arguments for their materials.

Summative assessment focuses on organisational experience. Delivery of the unit should encourage candidates to constantly consider organisational behaviours and practice within the context of knowledge management. Formative assessment can be an ongoing part of the Unit with candidates being given the assessments to work on as each topic is taught.

Assessment work should be based on a case study of an organisation and candidates may be given suitable information or asked to gather information about an organisation for themselves. Where candidates are directed to gather information the organisation should be familiar to the candidate or be one where the candidate can easily gather data. Candidates who have current work experience may use their own workplace as the focus for assessment.

Assessment could be undertaken by structured questions or an organisationally-based project.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Problem Solving and Information Technology at SCQF Level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates have to define the components of the knowledge environment in terms of systems, tools, processes and actions, which is the foundation of organisational communication theory. Understanding of the full range of tools and techniques used in the management of organisational knowledge will require considerable practical understanding of the applications of current media, techniques and channels available to maximise communication and overcome potential barriers to achievement of targets and goals

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Knowledge

As candidates analyse an organisation and clarify links between creation of correct conditions, means and actions, they will apply and enhance all elements of sophisticated problem solving skills. Candidates will benefit from practical experience of the value and limitations of knowledge management including applying technology for accessing, conveying and organising information, data and ideas; this could involve familiarisation with learning resource centres, intranets, groupware and virtual learning environments.

Open learning

If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice please refer to the SQA guide: *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (A1030, February 2001).

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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 Knowledge

This Unit is a one credit Unit at SCQF level 7, which is designed to:

♦   enhance your understanding of the development of knowledge management concepts in relation to business processes and performance
♦   enhance your ability to identify and explain knowledge management in an organisation

The Unit has two Outcomes. The first Outcome analyses the link between data, information and knowledge for an organisation and examines the components of knowledge management. It also considers how knowledge is captured and collated in an organisation. The second Outcome examines the various forms of creating and sharing knowledge in an organisation and considers the conditions, means and actions for managing knowledge, as well as exploring the results of and measurement techniques of knowledge management.

The content of the Unit will be kept relevant through the appropriate use of examples and by focusing the areas of study on organisations that are relevant to you. This should provide you with the flexibility required to study, as appropriate, organisations of different size, public and private organisations, and organisations operating in different markets.

For a successful completion of this Unit, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on the assessed work. This will require you to assess how a particular organisation has developed and embedded knowledge management in their business operations. To do this, you will be expected to apply the concepts you have learned during the course to the situation of the organisation concerned.