Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Quality Project

Unit code: DW6D 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable the candidate to investigate, analyse, conclude and recommend solutions to a quality related improvement development affecting an organisation. On completion of the unit it will provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following:

1   Develop a quality related project plan.
2   Implement the quality related project plan.
3   Evaluate the project findings.
4   Produce a formal project report.

Credit points and level: 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 7: (16 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: Access to the Unit is at the discretion of the centre, however, it is recommended that candidates undertaking this Unit posses good written and verbal skills.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication at SCQF level 6, Numeracy at SCQF level 5, Information Technology at SCQF level 5 and Problem Solving 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: This Unit may be assessed holistically by producing a project report in the form of an investigation in which the candidate must:

♦   produce a quality related project plan
♦   carry out the quality related project plan
♦   evaluate the project findings
♦   compile the formal project report

Early drafts of each component of the project report would ensure assessor involvement at all stages of writing and would support and provide continuous feedback to the candidate.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Quality Project

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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

Develop a quality related project plan

Knowledge and/or skills

- ♦ Proposal development
- ♦ Project aims and objectives
- ♦ Milestones of the development
- ♦ Time frame for the development

Evidence Requirements

Please refer to '*Evidence requirements for the Unit*' after the Outcomes.

Assessment guidelines

The Unit may be assessed holistically, guidance on which is stated after the Outcomes.

Outcome 2

Implement the quality related project plan

Knowledge and/or skills

- ♦ Time management
- ♦ Record progress
- ♦ Review planned development
- ♦ Action changes to plan

Evidence Requirements

Please refer to '*Evidence requirements for the Unit*' after the Outcomes.

Assessment guidelines

The Unit may be assessed holistically, guidance on which is stated after the Outcomes.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Quality Project

Outcome 3

Evaluate the project findings

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Data gathering
♦ Data analysis
♦ Data interpretation
♦ Project findings

Evidence Requirements

Please refer to '*Evidence requirements for the Unit'* after the Outcomes.

Assessment guidelines

The Unit may be assessed holistically, guidance on which is stated after the Outcomes.

Outcome 4

Produce a formal project report

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Introductory components of a formal report
♦ Discussion of findings
♦ Conclusions
♦ Recommendations
♦ Bibliographical references
♦ Attachments

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by developing and presenting a quality project report showing that they can:

♦ discuss and agree a proposed quality improvement development
♦ produce the aims and objectives of the development in the form of a project brief
♦ identify key milestones and time frame for the development
♦ carry out research into a quality improvement development within an agreed time scale
♦ conduct a comprehensive literature review, referring to current thinking on improvement methods for the development
♦ report and record progress on a regular basis throughout the stages of the project report
♦ review and document actions to the original plan
♦ make use of valid and relevant quantitative and qualitative data through primary and referenced secondary data
♦ evaluate the validity and reliability of the data collected

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Quality Project

♦   draw and justify conclusions based on an analysis of all the data collected and the evaluation of it
♦   put forward recommendations for action based on the analysis of the data and show that the recommendations are practical/feasible and that they can lead to specific quality improvements
♦   the evidence will be presented in a suitably word processed and referenced formal report format
♦   an oral presentation of the project findings

Assessment guidelines

This Unit is designed to be assessed holistically and as such both the content and the process of developing the project report are to be assessed. It is strongly recommended that the assessment process and feedback to candidates are undertaken on a regular and continuous basis. This would enable candidates to be supported throughout the project and ensure meaningful progress. It is suggested that the following stages may be of use:

Following initial investigation by the candidate, a suitable quality improvement development could be discussed and agreed with the tutor.

A written project brief of the firmed up aims and objectives of the agreed development could be produced and submitted by the candidate. (200-250 words)

A time frame for completion of key milestones could be produced on a one page document.

An ongoing record of the project progression could be maintained that indicates attainment of key milestones and satisfactory time management of the investigation.

The finalised project report should be in a recognised formal format and professionally bound and should be approximately 6,000 words in length. This excludes attachments to the report.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DW6D 34

Unit title: Quality Project

Superclass category: VD

Date of publication: August 2006

Version: 01

Source: SQA

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Quality Project

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 reflects the need for a high level of commitment and initiative of candidates undertaking it. The Unit requires candidates to identify a situation requiring a serious quality improvement, plan for that improvement, conduct research, prepare a report and draw conclusions and recommend solutions based on the findings.

The majority of candidates undertaking this Unit will have completed the Mandatory Units within the HNC Quality award and will already be familiar with the presentation of structured reports. It is not anticipated that the Unit will entail much in the way of class or group based delivery other than at the beginning of the Unit where there may be a need for sessions on idea generation and some input on methodologies and research strategies. Input may be required on referencing approach eg Harvard and it may be useful to allow candidates the opportunity to meet with ITC and library staff to assist in any desk research. However, the main delivery should consist of one to one tutorials to provide support, discuss work and ensure authenticity of submitted candidate work.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

To ensure a successful conclusion to the project report it is important that candidates are given adequate support throughout the Unit and that a staged approach to assessment be taken. The following is a guide to completing and assessing the main stages of the project and is indicative of one session per week between candidate and tutor:

Week 1 — the tutor should outline the general requirements of the quality improvement development. The candidate should make initial enquiries as to a suitable improvement task for the project.

Week 3 — the candidate should verbally present the proposed theme of the project to their tutor.

Week 5 — submission of a one page project brief for review by the tutor. This brief should indicate the aims and proposed method of carrying out the quality improvement project.

Week 8 — the project outline should be fully documented and otherwise complete to the satisfaction of the candidate and tutor.

Week 16 — collate and analyse data from suitable sources, the results of which should be recorded and reviewed by the candidate and the tutor. Candidates would be expected to keep in touch with the tutor during this period on a regular basis.

Week 20 — candidates should have submitted all sections/chapters of the project report to the tutor. This will culminate in a full draft version being submitted by this time. Candidates would be given feedback by the tutor as to any required corrections or updates to the project.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Quality Project

Week 24 — candidates should have submitted the project in its final bound form.

Week 25 — candidates could give a 5-10 minute verbal presentation of the project findings to the tutor.

Week 26 — the tutor would give final feedback on the completed project.

Candidates should be provided with an outline of the assessment criteria for their project report to aid the writing process.

Project report format

The layout that follows is intended to give guidance on the essentials of a well-presented project report. There are perfectly acceptable and other well established variations to the outline below:

Front Cover and Title page
Acknowledgements
Contents page
Summary — including terms of reference
Main body of the report (Chapters/Sections)
Conclusions
Recommendations
Attachments
Bibliographical References

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards all components of the Core Skill of Communication at SCQF level 6 because of: the need to provide a comprehensive literature review; the need to give an oral presentation of the project findings and to discuss the project with the tutor; and to write a formal report.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards all components of the Core Skill of Numeracy at SCQF level 5 because of the requirement to quantify data and to present it graphically in the report.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the Core Skill of Information Technology at SCQF level 5 because of the requirement to research which could include searches of the Internet, to use spreadsheet and word-processing software packages to produce the final report.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute to all components of the Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 because of the requirement to: plan and organise the project, identify key milestones and a time frame for the project; critically analyse the data collected and evaluate its validity and reliability; and review actions to the original plan

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Quality Project

Open learning

If the unit is delivered by open or distance learning models, 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 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 the SQA website **www.sqa.org.uk.**

General information for candidates

Unit title: Quality Project

The project should be relevant to a current work place or one you familiar with; it will be a challenging and hopefully enjoyable task. It is an opportunity for you to make a meaningful improvement to some aspect of an organisation's activities and have this formally recorded.

It's almost certain that you'll have completed the mandatory Units within the HNC Quality (G86N 15) and other quality units prior to undertaking this one. So, you should now be familiar with the fundamental aspects of quality and how to communicate through the use of management style reports.

This particular Unit is a bit different from the other units on the HNC in Quality as it will be assessed in stages without you getting a documented "pass" for each Outcome. Your tutor will be in regular contact with you as to the course of actions to be taken at each stage of the project.

The Unit requires some self-discipline, but it's more than likely that the skills you gain from this Unit will be of value to you whatever your connection to the field of quality. The content of the Unit ranges from choosing and researching a project through to its completion and final presentation.

It is almost certain that you will learn much about yourself, your chosen organisation and the topic area you are setting out to improve.

Good luck and most importantly enjoy your project!