

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory)

Unit code: DE27 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates adopt and use a recognised shorthand system and demonstrate note-taking and transcription skills. It is designed for candidates who have no previous experience of using a shorthand system.

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

- 1 Use a recognised shorthand system and demonstrate understanding of the principles, rules, special outlines, word groupings and distinguishing outlines of the system.
- 2 Use a recognised shorthand system to produce accurate notes within time constraints.
- 3 Produce an accurate transcript of shorthand notes, using a word processor, within time constraints.

Credit value: 2 HN Credit(s) 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 points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have good communication skills. These may be demonstrated by the achievement of core skill Communication at Higher level or by possession of Higher English and Communication or a suitable equivalent. Candidates should also have keyboarding, word processing and document presentation skills.

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: This Unit is included as an option in the framework for the HNC/D Administration and Information Technology. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of group award to which it contributes.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: This Unit should be assessed in two parts. The first part should be the production of a file of evidence demonstrating understanding of a recognised shorthand system. The second part should be practical document production produced from material dictated at 60 words per minute, under closed book controlled conditions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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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

Use a recognised shorthand system and demonstrate understanding of the principles, rules, special outlines, word groupings and distinguishing outlines of the system.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Understand the principles and rules of a recognised shorthand system
- Use special outlines, word groupings and distinguishing outlines
- Ability to write a recognised shorthand system and transcribe notes.

Evidence requirements

The candidate will be required to demonstrate her/his knowledge and/or skills by producing a file of evidence showing that they understand a system of shorthand – principles, rules, outlines, special outlines, word groupings and distinguishing outlines.

The file should be in the form of completed theory worksheets. The worksheets should show that the candidate can write clearly and neatly in a recognised shorthand system and transcribe shorthand. The worksheets should demonstrate that the candidate can:

- Transcribe 100 unseen printed outlines into English
- Transcribe 50 unseen printed special outlines and word groupings from printed shorthand into English
- Transcribe 10 sentences from English into shorthand

Assessment must be carried out under closed book conditions. Satisfactory performance will be an error tolerance of 10%.

Assessment guidelines

The file of evidence will support and consolidate teaching and will provide good evidence of knowledge and understanding.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory)

When a shorthand system has flexibility, ie there can be more than one way to write words, then questioning could be employed to supplement the work produced and assess knowledge and understanding. Where questioning and/or observation are used as evidence, then checklists must be in place.

Outcome 2

Use a recognised shorthand system to produce accurate notes within time constraints.

Knowledge and/or skills

- speed development
- vocabulary building
- listening skills
- memorising techniques

Evidence requirements

Candidates should demonstrate ability to use a recognised shorthand system to accurately produce notes, dictated at speed. The assessment for this Outcome is combined with Outcome 3. Details of the Evidence requirements can be found after Outcome 3.

Assessment guidelines

The Assessment for this Outcome should be combined with Outcome 3 as part of a single holistic assessment.

Outcome 3

Produce an accurate transcript of shorthand notes, using a word processor, within time constraints.

Knowledge and/or skills

- transcription techniques
- planning and organising work within deadlines
- document presentation
- proof-reading skills

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to show they can accurately transcribe shorthand notes, dictated at a speed of 60 words per minute. This must be demonstrated by recording and transcribing a document of 120 words, on at least 3 occasions. Shorthand notes must be attached to the document submitted.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory)

Documents should be transcribed following organisational/house style. Transcription time should be no longer than 20 minutes per document.

To be successful, the candidate must produce an accurate transcription, within an error tolerance of 4 errors per document, including errors in transcription and presentation. Where a candidate has 4 errors or less, then the candidate will be permitted to amend the work submitted to produce a final copy.

Amendments can be made outwith the time allocated for transcription.

Where a candidate has 5 errors or more, in a document, then the candidate will be required to undertake an alternative assessment.

This assessment must be carried out under closed book conditions.

Assessment guidelines

The Assessment of this Outcome should be combined with Outcome 2 as part of a single assessment.

Candidates may access a dictionary during assessment.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DE27 34

Unit title: Shorthand Skills (Introductory)

Superclass category: AZ

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory)

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

The Unit is primarily intended to enable candidates to use a recognised shorthand system and develop basic speed writing skills. It is recognised that the need for traditional shorthand dictation of correspondence, ie manager/secretary, is in decline. Therefore, this Unit should build a general vocabulary, rather than an exclusive business vocabulary, as it is expected that candidates would use the skills acquired, in a business setting, to undertake, for example, note-taking at meetings which may require a good general vocabulary.

Outcome 1 introduces the theory of the shorthand system, while building vocabulary and applying the rules and principles of the system. Candidates should build a file of competence throughout the course and develop oral transcription skills as part of their learning.

Outcome 2 introduces basic speed development, listening skills and memorising techniques, as well as extending vocabulary. The requirement to work within deadlines is also introduced.

Outcome 3 introduces transcription techniques and reinforces the need to plan, organise and check work. Working to deadlines is reinforced.

Students may progress from this Unit to Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development).

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Candidates undertaking this unit are likely to be working towards a group award which is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to undertake a supervisory position in an administrative context. The skill of shorthand will greatly improve employment prospects, especially where committee servicing is required. The vocabulary introduced in the teaching of this course should not be restricted to business words and phrases. Committee administration, in particular, requires a good, general vocabulary.

Assessment for this Unit will be in two parts:

Part 1 will be the production of a file of competence which demonstrates that the candidate has a good understanding of a recognised shorthand system. The file will be built over a period of time and could contain observation checklists to support evidence.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory)

Part 2 will be the production of a document of at least 120 words, dictated at 60 words per minute, using a word processor, on at least 3 occasions. Documents should be transcribed following organisational/house style. Transcription time should be no longer than 20 minutes per document. To be successful, the candidate must produce an accurate transcription, within an error tolerance of 4 errors per passage, including errors in transcription and presentation. Where a candidate has 4 errors or less, then the candidate will be allowed to amend the work submitted to produce a final copy. Amendments can be made outwith the time allocated for transcription. Where a candidate has 5 errors or more, then the candidate will be required to undertake an alternative assessment. Shorthand notes must be attached to the document submitted.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by an open learning course which included regular “drop-in” sessions at the Centre in order to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the single assessment for Learning Outcomes 2 and 3 is delivered in a supervised environment under closed book conditions.

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 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: Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory)

This Unit is designed to enable you to adopt and use a recognised shorthand system.

You will be introduced to the theory of a recognised shorthand system, while building a good, general vocabulary. You will then undertake basic speed development. You will also develop your listening skills and memorising techniques will be introduced. Transcription skills will be introduced and reinforced throughout the course - the purpose of writing shorthand is to ensure that you are able to produce an accurate transcript of your notes.

In order to achieve this Unit successfully, you will have to demonstrate that you understand and can use a recognised shorthand system. Evidence for this will be by the production of a file of evidence, collected throughout your course, to show that you understand a recognised shorthand system. This evidence may include written work or observation by your Lecturer.

Towards the end of your course, you will undertake assessment where you must produce a document, dictated at a speed of 60 words per minute, within time constraints on 3 separate occasions. This will demonstrate your ability to use a recognised shorthand system.

Shorthand is a useful skill and has many applications in a modern business environment – for example, note-taking at meetings. As potential office administrators, this skill will improve employment prospects.