



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

Unit code: F609 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to develop skills in analysing, planning and managing interviews in vocational contexts.

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

- 1 Analyse the interview process.
- 2 Prepare to conduct an interview.
- 3 Manage and conduct an interview.

Credit points and level: 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 credit 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 is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if candidates had skills in Communication at SCQF level 6. This may be evidenced by the following:

- ◆ Higher English (C115 12) or its component Units
- ◆ Higher ESOL (C222 12)
- ◆ Communication Core Skill (D01B 12) or (F3GB 12)
- ◆ IELTS level 6
- ◆ Other similar qualifications or work experience

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill component of Oral Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. Further detail is provided in the Support Notes.

General information for centres (cont)

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.

Outcomes may be integrated with elements of the course which involve interviewing others. It may, however, also be taught as a stand-alone Unit.

Assessment: There are three assessments in this Unit. The first assessment requires the analysis and evaluation of a live or recorded interview. The other two assessments involve the planning and conducting of a real/simulated interview.

Centre arrangements should be in place to ensure the authenticity of all evidence submitted by the candidate.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

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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

Analyse the interview process

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Types, structures and features of types of interviews
- ◆ Purposes of interviews
- ◆ Formats and media
- ◆ Perceptual factors
- ◆ Appropriate language, tone, register and style
- ◆ Verbal and non verbal communication techniques
- ◆ Ethical and legal considerations

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can, in response to an interview:

- ◆ identify the type of interview
- ◆ comment on its structure
- ◆ analyse significant features
- ◆ evaluate the effectiveness of the interview in relation to purpose and audience

Evidence will be a written/oral response of a minimum of 500 words or 5 minutes produced in supervised, open-book conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

The interview for analysis could be recorded or online. It should be of sufficient length to allow in depth analysis, and could involve interviewing with such purposes as information gathering, research, entertainment, selection or appraisal.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

Outcome 2

Prepare to conduct an interview

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Setting goals
- ◆ Research of background information
- ◆ Identification of appropriate interviewee
- ◆ Preparation of interview questions appropriate to purpose, format and medium
- ◆ Planning timing, location and environment

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ produce a folio of research and planning notes to support the interview to be conducted in Outcome 3
- ◆ research background information for an interview
- ◆ identify and locate an appropriate interviewee
- ◆ prepare questions/prompts to be used in the interview
- ◆ plan the detail of the interview

Assessment Guidelines

Questions/prompts could be in note form, and outline a structure and clear line of questioning with an understanding that secondary questions may arise in relation to a previous answer.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

Outcome 3

Manage and conduct an interview

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Interviewing styles
- ◆ Structuring of interview
- ◆ Appropriate questioning technique
- ◆ Use of language to control interaction
- ◆ Use of non-verbal communication and paralanguage
- ◆ Listening skills
- ◆ Legal and ethical considerations
- ◆ Deadlines and durations

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ conduct a selected type of interview
- ◆ adopt an interviewing style appropriate to objectives
- ◆ encourage relevant opinion and information
- ◆ maintain impartiality
- ◆ use verbal/non verbal techniques to progress communication
- ◆ keep to deadlines and durations

The interview should last for a minimum of eight minutes. Evidence should include a recording of performance and/or a detailed observation checklist with notes and any support materials.

Assessment Guidelines

The interview could be real or simulated.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F609 35
Unit title: Interviewing Skills
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Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

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 may be taught as part of a Group Award or as a free-standing Unit. If it is taught as part of a Group Award it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area/context of the Group Award to which it contributes. Although the Unit is expressed in generic terms, it should be related to a context that is familiar to candidates. The Unit offers the opportunity to further develop skills in research and oral communication in the context of analysing and managing the interview process. There are opportunities for developing interviewing skills in such situations as, for example, investigative research, information and news gathering, television, radio or online journalism, selection, marketing and counselling. The objectives of the interview should be clearly defined, as in seeking information, opinion or advice, or establishing a relationship/rapport in order to support, recruit or entertain. Candidates should, wherever possible, negotiate the type of interview to be conducted and should have the opportunity to consider the advantages and disadvantages of recording and note-taking.

The interview used as a text for analysis in Outcome 1 should be relevant to the assessment tasks for Outcomes 2 and 3. Any interview situations, simulated or real, may be appropriate. Assessment tasks may be integrated with those for other Units which require candidates to conduct an interview. Ideally, work will build upon skills developed in HN Units such as *Complex Oral Presentation* (DH49 34) and on understanding of perception problems in communication covered in the Unit *Interpersonal and Group Skills* (D7XF 35).

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Examples of different types of interview should be provided formatively to make clear that interviews can vary in style and structure. Candidates could be encouraged to discuss, analyse and evaluate the performances of professional practitioners. Ways to adapt a style appropriate to objectives could be considered and role play may be a valuable part of the learning process.

Outcome 1

Analysis could begin by an identification of the purpose and focus of an interview. Candidates should be able to discuss the uses of open and closed questions and make distinctions between questions designed to elicit facts and those designed to obtain explanation, opinion and interpretation. Questions should match the stated objectives and may be based on critical incidents, centre on experience, or criterion-based, concentrating on the requirements of a person specification. Constructive responses and those which depend on deflecting or fogging techniques might be illustrated. The effects of non-verbal communication and paralanguage (incidents of intonation, stress, pitch, volume and pace) on the success of the interviewing process could be examined along with issues such as the interviewer's management of personal attitudes and the use of language and paralanguage to structure and control the interview process. Discussion of structure would include understanding of how to open and close an interview. The effects of critical factors such as location, lighting, seating, and positioning as well as appropriate dress codes for different occasions and locations may be relevant.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

Outcomes 2 and 3

Investigation of background information to assure competence will be essential as candidates prepare for and undertake a real or simulated interview. Purpose and duration must be clarified with the assessor. Legal and ethical issues could be discussed as part of negotiating a suitable brief and may be an aspect of research. Candidates have to identify and locate appropriate people to interview, confirming accuracy if necessary by checking background facts and personal details of interviewees. An important skill is the type and wording of the interview questions. Open, closed and leading questions practised in role play situations will demonstrate that different kinds of questions elicit different responses. Questions or prompts planned to fit the brief and keep to the point of the interview can indicate a proposed direction, although in practice an ability to adjust planned questions in the light of responses is desirable. Notes on the detail of the interview might outline the necessary arrangements and any equipment for recording and that the environment chosen has taken account of this requirement. The environment of the interview should support required interaction. The seating arrangement could be confrontational (for a recruitment or disciplinary interview) or relaxed (for a TV chat show or encouraging someone to be forthcoming with information). A diagram or plan which could include details of lighting, props and accommodation selected in light of the interview's objectives might be part of the folio of notes.

It could be expected that candidates will brief interviewees adequately on the proposed lines of questioning and on the contribution expected from them. In adopting an interviewing style and verbal/non verbal techniques appropriate to objectives; eye contact must be established and maintained as appropriate; gestures should be used appropriately; posture should be suitably open and encouraging. Dress code may be formal or informal according to the atmosphere and environment. The candidate will demonstrate control of the interview, always keeping stated objectives in mind and ensure management of the interview by discouraging digression, knowing how to interrupt and being able to change direction without allowing the interviewee to take control. Adherence to deadlines and agreed durations is an aspect of competence. Although formal evaluation of interviewing technique is not essential to achievement, the use of assessor and peer feedback in formative and summative work will assist skills development.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Candidates will have opportunities to develop a sophisticated level of oral skills in questioning, listening and responding to others in the most appropriate way to progress communication during the interview. Analysing and responding to the needs of the brief will involve planning and structuring questions to meet the needs of purpose. Exploration of the value and impact of open and closed questioning, adapting register and style to the needs of interviewees and using a range of active listening techniques is integral to achievement.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning provided suitable centre arrangements are in place to ensure the authenticity of all evidence submitted by the candidate.

For Outcomes 1 and 2 of this Unit delivery could be by online or distance learning, with tutor input support at all stages of draft.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

In Outcome 3 candidates must be directly observed and may have to be assessed in the presenting centre if interactive communication links are not appropriate/available. Alternatively assessment may be made of a video recorded performance which meets all assessment criteria.

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Interviewing Skills

The Unit may be studied as part of a Group Award at HNC or HND level, as a stand-alone Unit, or as a means to proceed to further study at degree level (or similar). If you are studying for a Group Award in a specific vocational sector, the tasks that you do will be relevant to this.

In order to complete this Unit successfully you will be required to complete a range of tasks in which you will demonstrate analyse and manage the interview process.

In Outcome 1 you will demonstrate your awareness of the factors that contribute to an effective interview. You will analyse an interview, consider the type of interview selected, and be ready to comment on and evaluate its main features.

Outcome 2 requires you to plan and prepare for interviewing someone. This involves deciding the purpose of the interview, undertaking some background research, identifying and contacting an interviewee, producing the appropriate questions/prompts and planning arrangements.

In Outcome 3 you will conduct the interview, based on these preparations. You will need to set up the arrangements, brief your interviewee, structure the interview and ask appropriate and different styles of question to achieve your purpose.

There are opportunities to develop the Oral component of the Core Skill *Communication* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components.