



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

**Unit code:** H2X9 34

**Superclass:** AJ

**Publication date:** November 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed for trade union workplace representatives, learning representatives, equality representatives and/ or health and safety representatives who are new to their role or may not have undertaken this level of training in the subject. In this Unit candidates will develop their knowledge of how to apply practical skills to complex issues in a range of situations that are within the trade union context.

This is a mandatory Unit of the Higher National Certificate in Trade Union Organising and Representation and can also be taken as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued personal development.

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

- 1 Describe the range of skills required by a trade union representative.
- 2 Engage with individuals and groups on a range of employment relations issues.
- 3 Relate a range of legal documentation to employment relations issues.
- 4 Present complex information appropriate to purpose and audience.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Although entry is at the discretion of the centre, it is recommended that candidates possess good communication and interpersonal skills. In addition candidates should be able to demonstrate the support of their nominating union.

## **General information (cont)**

### **Credit points and level**

1.5 Higher National Unit credit(s) at SCQF level 7: (12 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.*

### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of the Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

### **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.

This is a mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and can also be delivered as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

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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

Describe the range of skills required by a trade union representative.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- 5 Role of a trade union representative.
- 6 Range of communication skills.
- 7 Negotiation and mediation skills.
- 8 Networking and interpersonal skills.
- 9 Data collection and recording skills.
- 10 Observation and analytical skills.
- 11 Interviewing skills.

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- 12 explain the role of a trade union representative
- 13 describe five types of communication skills required by a trade union representative, in context to where they would be used.
- 14 outline three other skills or personal attributes required by trade union representatives in context to where they would be used

### Outcome 2

Engage with individuals and groups on a range of employment relations issues.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- 15 Interpersonal and Group Working Skills.
- 16 Methods of handling and storing personal and/ or confidential information.
- 17 Range of employment relations issues.
- 18 Factors impacting on trade union and employer engagement

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

### Evidence Requirements

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

- 19 identify a range of employment relations issues
- 20 engage effectively with an individual member to gather relevant information
- 21 contribute information and comment on employment relations issues to a group discussion
- 22 respond appropriately to the contributions of others to the discussion
- 23 explain why it is important to respect confidentiality
- 24 explain different methods of handling and storing personal and/or confidential information
- 25 explain how internal and external factors, eg other trade union activity, may impact on trade union and employer engagement

### Outcome 3

Relate a range of legal documentation to employment relations issues.

### Knowledge and/or Skills

- 26 Types of legal documentation.
- 27 Common employment relations issues.
- 28 Trade union policies and procedures.
- 29 Analytical skills.

### Evidence Requirements

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

- 30 describe the types of legal documentation relative to relevant employment relations issues
- 31 identify and summarise the key points of three legal documents and three employment relations issues

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

### **Outcome 4**

Present complex information appropriate to purpose and audience.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- 32 Communication and Interpersonal skills.
- 33 Formal and informal meeting procedures.
- 34 Summarising, synthesising and presenting relevant information.
- 35 Appropriate terminology, tone and pace.
- 36 Evaluation techniques.

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- 37 select and present complex information in a format appropriate to the audience
- 38 use a range of techniques and strategies to facilitate the progress of the meeting
- 39 conform to meeting procedures appropriate to the task and purpose
- 40 evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting including own performance and contribution

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

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 60 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

This is a mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation, intended for Trade Union Workplace Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives, Learning Representatives and/ or Equality Representatives.

In this Unit candidates will develop their knowledge of how to apply practical skills and ideas to complex issues in a range of situations that are within the trade union context.

On completion of this Unit candidates should have a clearer understanding of the range of skills and techniques associated with representatives' organising and regulatory functions and have developed confidence in their own effective application of these skills.

Emphasis should be placed on trade union best practice throughout.

### **Guidance on the delivery of this Unit**

This unit affords potential for integration with other units in the HNC Framework for Trade Union Representatives. Where this is the case, centres should ensure that the Evidence Requirements for all Units are achieved.

Candidates will be practising trade union representatives — eg Equality Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives, Learning Representatives or Workplace Representatives. Course participants are likely to attend in specialist groups drawn either from a single workplace or sector or from a variety of workplaces and sectors. Courses incorporating this Unit are therefore best delivered in short blocks or via day release, attended by cohorts of between 10 and 20 participants. The tutor should be an experienced trade union representative with knowledge and understanding of trade union structures, policy and practice.

Participant-centred, co-operative group work is highly recommended. Candidates will bring a range of valuable existing knowledge and experience, whether from trade union involvement, work, previous study or life in general and it is important to promote exchange of knowledge, experience and views in a mutually respectful, mutually supportive environment.

Guidelines for working together should be agreed from the outset. This discussion of how to work together could form the basis of a useful introduction to the Unit.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

By the end of Outcome 1 candidates should be able to describe the range of skills required by a trade union representative — eg a workplace representative, equality representative, health and safety representative or learning representative. Knowledge and understanding of the relevant representative's role and operational context are prerequisites to the identification of skills the involved. Activities designed to help develop this knowledge could focus on the candidate's specialism. Course participants might benefit from working in small groups to share knowledge, experience and views on what they themselves see as their most important tasks and the skills required to carry out these tasks, before reporting back for wider discussion. They could also describe to each other what they do in their current role in a typical week or month, compare this to the role description they have jointly devised and move on to consider which skills they most need to develop in order to improve their personal effectiveness.

Outcome 1 seeks to emphasise that communication skills are essential for trade union representatives and participants should be encouraged to develop good practice in responding to and delivering information in a trade union context. Listening, non-verbal communication, note-taking, summarising, reporting, reading and understanding, speaking, negotiating and presentation skills might be highlighted here. Contexts where these might be used include interviewing, consulting and informing members, preparing cases, preparing for meetings, representing members in encounters with management or within the trade union, participating in and conducting meetings and delivering reports.

Particular attention should be drawn to the importance of leadership skills in the context of discussion of the representative's role in organising members.

Other skills that might be discussed in Outcome 1 include interviewing and research skills in the context of member representation or investigation into learning needs; skills in data collection, recording and analysis in the context of audits (of membership and trade union organisation, occupational health, safety and welfare, equality or learning needs in the workplace); organisational skills; time management skills and interpersonal skills deployed in a wide range of contexts. Participants might also wish to discuss the importance of personal attributes like patience and self-control, citing a range of relevant contexts in which these are applied.

By the end of Outcome 2, candidates should be able to engage with individuals and groups on a range of employment relations issues. Delivery should provide opportunities for participants to identify and discuss issues of relevance to their members at work. The focus here will depend largely upon each particular group's specialism, ie whether participants are Workplace Representatives, Equality Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives or Learning Representatives.

Outcome 2 is intended to take account of the fact that trade union representatives are likely to engage with a range of individuals, including members, managers, peers and other trade union officials in order to gather information and participants would therefore benefit from opportunities to develop skills and confidence in this respect. Paired introductions and paired activities might help develop verbal and non-verbal communication techniques, as might role-play interviews, covering scenarios like interviewing a member as part of case investigation/ case preparation, accident investigation or investigation of learning needs and aspirations. Subsequent reflection of best practice could include making sure that participants understand why it is important to respect confidentiality and are able to explain methods of handling and storing personal and/ or confidential information.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

The participative group-work approach to learning will offer many opportunities for those involved to contribute information and comment to group discussion. Participants should be encouraged to help and support each other to develop confidence and skills in listening, contributing information and responding and adapting to others' contributions. Examples of potential employment relations discussion topics include trade union recognition and facilities; employment contracts and rights; grievance and disciplinary handling; learning agreements; discrimination and harassment; safety representatives' functions and safety committees as well as any relevant bargaining issues or specific cases.

Trade union representatives are part of the trade union team in the workplace, locally, nationally and internationally and participants might benefit from consideration of factors that may impact upon trade union and employer engagement. Examples could range from the potential effect of employment relations problems on a local learning partnership to how national and global attacks on workers rights impact upon the ability of the trade union to further the interests of its membership.

By the end of Outcome 3, candidates should be able to relate a range of legal documentation to employment relations issues. This Outcome is intended to ensure that participants are familiar with types of legal documentation relevant to the context within which they operate and that they can identify and summarise key points of documents in relation to issues they might tackle in the workplace. Content is likely to depend largely on participants' specialism but will generally include consideration of legislation, codes of practice, collective agreements and practice relevant to trade union representatives' rights. Here, the tutor might provide a list of examples of the sorts of misunderstandings that can arise over paid time off and facilities and ask candidates to work in small groups to prepare responses that summarise key points of the relevant ACAS Code of Practice.

Learning representatives could be encouraged to focus on documents and issues in relation to lifelong learning. This could include documentation relative to the activities of learning representatives and national and/ or local agreements between the trade union and the employer regarding workforce learning. Group discussion of barriers to learning might help them to identify issues such as lack of time to learn due to working hours and/or shift patterns, cost issues and issues in relation to availability or accessibility of appropriate learning opportunities.

Workplace Representatives might relate terms and conditions agreements to issues raised by their members or to case studies covering pay, hours of work, location, shift patterns, leave entitlements, flexible working and so on. They could gain further experience by using ACAS and Government resources to help them summarise the meaning of contractual terms, how a contract can be changed, what terms are imposed by law and how a contract can be varied lawfully. Case study activities on handling grievance or disciplinary cases would also present ideal opportunities for participants to identify and summarise key points of relevant legal documents and the employment relations issues involved.



## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

Equality representatives might identify and summarise key points in relation to harassment and identify its legal definition following group discussion of its nature and effects. They might also relate health and safety law to the issue. Group activities could be designed to encourage participants to identify and summarise key points of current relevant legislation, codes of practice and case law in relation to the issue of equal pay. Participants could also be asked to identify, describe and define direct discrimination, indirect discrimination and victimisation with reference to relevant legal documentation. They might also benefit from working in small groups to identify and summarise current relevant legislation, duties imposed, qualifying conditions and any permitted exemptions or justifications in respect of gender, race, LGBT, disability, religion or belief and/ or age issues and provide reports to the wider group summarising the key points of their findings.

A good introduction for health and safety representatives might be group discussion of current workplace issues, focused not only on the most apparent hazards, eg slips, trips, falls, working at height, poor lighting, working with chemicals and so on but also on the way work is organised in terms of pace, intensity, hours of work and shift patterns and the employer's approach to health and safety. Participants could then be asked to identify and relate relevant parts of the Health and Safety At Work Act to the problems they have highlighted. Delivery should also aim to provide opportunities for participants to gain practice in relating relevant regulations to workplace health and safety issues. Activity could be designed to encourage participants to identify and summarise the sorts of misunderstandings that arise in the workplaces over the function and rights of the Safety Representative and devise possible responses that identify and summarise key points of Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations. They could also make brief notes that identify and summarise employers' duties under the Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations and compare each of these duties to the current situation at work. HSE publications to which health and safety representatives might need access could include but are not limited to Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, Work With Display Screen Equipment, Personal Protective Equipment Regulations, Manual Handling Regulations, Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

By the end of Outcome 4, candidates should be able to present complex information appropriate to purpose and audience. Trade union representatives present a wide range of complex information in various formal and informal contexts, including one-to-one meetings with members, potential members, fellow trade union representatives or managers; trade union branch, committee meetings or conferences; planning meetings; negotiating meetings; case representation at various levels and so on. Presenting reports on group discussions and research to peers should help develop participants' ability to select and present complex information in a format appropriate to the audience. Role play activities could help broaden experience, develop confidence in using a range of techniques and strategies to facilitate meeting progress and provide ideal opportunities for participants to evaluate effectiveness.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

### **Guidance on the assessment of this Unit**

This Unit could be assessed holistically by a portfolio of candidate evidence or workbook covering all Evidence Requirements.

Assessment could comprise several separate tasks and it would be possible for a candidate to combine and submit these as one complete assignment. Evidence for assessment can be in any appropriate format as long as the Evidence Requirements are met. For example, assessment may include role play, case studies, group discussion, presentations, observation, written or oral reports and/ or diagrammes.

### **Assessment Guidelines**

#### **Outcome 1**

Outcome 1 assessment evidence could comprise responses to a series of questions in any appropriate format.

#### **Outcome 2**

Outcome 2 assessment evidence could comprise responses to a series of questions in any appropriate format, supported by a record of observation of the candidate's application of interpersonal and group working skills.

#### **Outcome 3**

Outcome 3 assessment evidence could comprise responses to a series of questions or short reports in any appropriate format.

#### **Outcome 4**

Outcome 4 could be assessed by observation.

### **Online and Distance Learning**

This Unit could be delivered by open learning; however it would require careful planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill of *Communication at SCQF level 6* will be developed by candidates through a range of activities (both written and oral) as well as class and group discussions.

The Core Skill of *Problem Solving at SCQF level 6* will be developed as the candidate will be dealing with various complex workplace issues and will also learn about the trade union approach to problem solving.

The Core Skill of *Working with Others at SCQF level 6* will be developed as the candidate will be involved in group discussions and group tasks, participate in union team building activities, theory and practice.

The Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 5* will be developed as the candidate will likely utilise computer search engines when carrying out research.

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Trade Union Organising and Representation: Practical Skills for Trade Union Representatives

This Unit will be of interest to you if you are a trade union workplace representative, learning representative, equality representative and/or health and safety representative. You may be new to your role or may have not undertaken this level of training in the subject.

Communication and interpersonal skills are essential for trade union representatives. In this Unit you will develop your knowledge of the practical skills required to engage with individuals and groups when dealing with the various issues that arise when carrying out your role as a trade union representative.

You must be able to demonstrate the support of your nominating union to undertake the Unit. This is a mandatory Unit of the Higher National Certificate in Trade Union Organising and Representation but can also be taken as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development.

To achieve this Unit you will complete four Outcomes:

- ◆ Describe the range of skills required by a trade union representative.
- ◆ Engage with individuals and groups on a range of employment relations issues.
- ◆ Relate a range of legal documentation to employment relations issues.
- ◆ Present complex information appropriate to purpose and audience

Assessment for the Unit may include evidence generated from role play, case studies, group discussion, presentations, observation, written or oral reports and/ or diagrammes.

During this Unit, there may also be opportunities to develop your Core Skills in *Communication, Working with others, Problem Solving* and *Information and Communication Technology*.