

-SQA-SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Unit number-	7411718
-Unit title-	COMMUNICATION: COMMUNICATION SKILLS PRACTICAL FOR THE WORKPLACE
-Superclass category-	KB
-Date of publication- (month and year)	APRIL 1998
-Originating centre for unit-	SQA

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Applying practical communication skills to complex issues in the workplace.

OUTCOMES:

1. produce written information in a prescribed format on a complex vocational issue;
2. present oral information on a complex vocational issue;
3. contribute to a formal group discussion on a complex vocational issue.

CREDIT VALUE: 1 HN Credit

ACCESS STATEMENT: Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However it would be beneficial if the candidate had competence in Communication at Stage 3 of the Core Skills framework. This may be evidenced by possession of National Certificate module 7110045 Communication 3; or similar qualifications or experience.

Additional copies of this unit can be obtained from:

The Committee and Administration Unit, SQA, Hanover House, 24 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 7NQ, (Tel: 0141-242 2168).

At the time of publication the cost is £1.50 per unit (minimum order £5.00).

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION**STATEMENT OF STANDARDS**

Unit number: 7411718

Unit title: COMMUNICATION: PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
FOR THE WORKPLACE

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

OUTCOME

1. PRODUCE WRITTEN INFORMATION IN A PRESCRIBED FORMAT ON A COMPLEX VOCATIONAL ISSUE

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) The information contained in the communication is relevant to purpose and audience.
- (b) The communication has a clear and logical sequence.
- (c) Vocabulary and register are appropriate to purpose and audience.
- (d) Presentation of written information is appropriate to purpose and audience.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range for this outcome is fully expressed in the performance criteria.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written evidence of one document in a prescribed format.

OUTCOME

2. PRESENT ORAL INFORMATION ON A COMPLEX VOCATIONAL ISSUE

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Information conveyed is relevant to purpose and audience.
- (b) A clear and logical sequence is demonstrated in the delivery.
- (c) Supporting material is relevant to the subject and purpose of the presentation.
- (d) Language use is appropriate to subject and audience.
- (e) Tone, pace and voice projection are appropriate to purpose and audience.
- (f) Non-verbal communication is appropriate to purpose and audience.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range for this outcome is fully expressed in the performance criteria.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

One piece of oral evidence sustained for a minimum of 5 minutes.

OUTCOME

3. CONTRIBUTE TO A FORMAL GROUP DISCUSSION ON A COMPLEX VOCATIONAL ISSUE

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Individual contribution is effective in terms of identifying a problem.
- (b) Individual contribution is effective in terms of proposing alternative courses of action to resolve a problem.
- (c) Interaction within the group helps to progress discussion.
- (d) Interaction within the group is appropriate to purpose and membership.
- (e) Non-verbal communication is clear and unambiguous.
- (f) Action recommended is clear and unambiguous.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range for this outcome is fully expressed in the performance criteria.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Evidence of planning, contributing to and responding to oral group discussion.

Accurate oral and/or written record of action recommended.

MERIT STATEMENT: To gain a pass in this unit, a candidate must meet the standards set out in the outcomes, performance criteria, range statements and evidence requirements.

To achieve a merit in this unit, a candidate must demonstrate a superior or more sophisticated level of performance. In this unit this might be shown in the following ways:

- (a) in varied language use;
- (b) professional standard documentation;
- (c) use of graphical information.

ASSESSMENT

In order to achieve this unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the performance criteria for each outcome within the range specified. Details of these requirements are given for each outcome. The assessment instruments used should follow the general guidance offered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) assessment model and an integrative approach to assessment is encouraged. (See references at the end of support notes).

Accurate records should be made of the assessment instruments used showing how evidence is generated for each outcome and giving marking schemes and/or checklists, etc. Records of candidates' achievements should be kept. These records will be available for external verification.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Proposals to modify outcomes, range statements or agreed assessment arrangements should be discussed in the first place with the external verifier.

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HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION**SUPPORT NOTES**

Unit number: 7411718

Unit title: COMMUNICATION: PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
FOR THE WORKPLACE

SUPPORT NOTES: This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

NOTIONAL DESIGN LENGTH: SQA allocates a notional design length to a unit on the basis of time estimated for achievement of the stated standards by a candidate whose starting point is as described in the access statement. The notional design length for this unit is 40 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE The target audience for this unit is those candidates who are already working, or wish to work, in an essentially practical setting. The aim of this unit is to equip candidates with the linguistic skills to deal with complex issues and to allow the linguistic skills to be placed in as realistic a context as possible, using documentation with which candidates may already be familiar - eg. an accident report, business letter or memo. Candidates will also be expected to transmit information orally and participate in group discussion and decision-making, both integral parts of the practical workplace environment.

CONTENT/CONTEXT

Outcome 1

The task of the candidate is to present information in a logical coherent fashion using as a context a workplace situation - e.g. accident report, arrangements for the storage of dangerous materials/equipment.

There should be full discussion with the candidate in terms of the purpose and intended audience of the document in order to ensure that the document produced is appropriate.

The candidate should be encouraged to consider aspects such as any prior knowledge the audience has and how this might affect the structure of the document and the vocabulary used.

The candidate should also be encouraged to consider the most appropriate register and syntax. While the issue is complex the language need not be unduly complex - indeed in the case of a report outlining the storage of equipment much of the language would be short and to the point. Given the varied uses to which an accident report might be put and the varied audiences who might be involved, then the register and syntax would involve several variables.

Spelling should be accurate and the candidates should be encouraged to use dictionaries and/or spellcheck.

The final document produced should follow the standard conventions.

While the document format would be prescribed, the candidate would have to be accurate in the presentation of information. For example, in the accident report, the candidate would be expected to present details of the accident, witness statements etc. in a clear, logical sequence. Emphasis should be placed on accuracy and clarity of information presented with the candidate being made aware that the accident report is a crucial document which may be used, for example, either to pursue or defend a negligence claim. The candidate, therefore, should not only think of the 'first' audience - eg. the line manager - but also a wider audience and choose vocabulary and sentence structure to suit.

In the case of the storage of dangerous materials again the details must be accurate in terms of what the materials are and how and where they are stored. As in the above example, the sequence in which the information is presented must be considered. The accident report can, but not always, lend itself to a chronological structure. However, in the example of material storage it might be that the candidate can move from the least to the most dangerous materials. In this example there might also be some evaluation of the adequacy of the storage arrangements.

The candidate should be reminded of the importance of this information in terms of Health and Safety legislation as well as the safety of their colleagues and therefore must choose the most effective structure, layout and vocabulary to allow full understanding by the reader.

Graphical information may be used to supplement the written communication.

Should the assessment document be a letter, it would be envisaged that the topic(s) dealt with in the letter would be fairly complex - perhaps a letter to a supplier who in the past has given good service indicating in some detail recent shortfalls in the service given to your company and requesting improvement.

The candidate should be encouraged to consider the past good working relationship and how that will affect the tone of the letter. Also to be considered should be not only the itemisation of the problems but how these have affected the candidate's company and how this information should be presented in the letter. This is a formal business letter and must conform to all conventions of layout, register and syntax.

The evidence of assessment could be a detailed, completed pro-forma but the written skill evidenced therein would have to be appropriate to purpose and audience in terms of sequencing information and presenting essential and supporting information. Register and language use would also have to be appropriate to purpose and audience.

Outcome 2

As in Outcome 1 the emphasis will be placed on what actually happens in the workplace.

The task could be fairly straightforward such as the explanation of a particular process, how a piece of machinery works or a short instruction session on how to deal with a difficult client. The focus would be placed on a logical structure which suits both the purpose and the audience. For example if the presentation was to instruct new employees about how to use a particular piece of equipment or how to carry out a particular process, then the sequence and language of the presentation should be that which would allow the listener/s to be able to operate the machine or carry out the process. The candidate would be expected to highlight the crucial aspects as well as any health and safety requirements.

It would not be envisaged that the presentation would be absolutely formal but the candidate would have to demonstrate control of the presentation and use appropriate register and language. Where appropriate the candidate should be encouraged to use visual/non visual aids.

The context used in Outcome 1 could also be used in this outcome.

Outcome 3

The situation envisaged here is a group problem-solving scenario. Again the emphasis will be on what actually happens in the workplace.

Each member of the group should contribute and respond to the contribution of others during a group discussion.

Each candidate would be expected to comment upon a situation which prevails currently and, within a group discussion, propose and discuss alternatives/improvements/advancements.

In this outcome the candidate would be expected to employ appropriate register and language use. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to both ask and answer questions in such a way as to progress discussion. The candidate would be expected to demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication skills.

Although formal meeting documentation is not required, there should be evidence of planning. This might take the form of an agenda or a planning sheet which indicates the reason for the meeting, what is to be discussed, what the individual candidate's contribution to the meeting is to be in some detail, as well as the what, where and when of the meeting. Candidates should be prepared to discuss issues and where necessary table documents for discussion. The documents need not be long or complex. The candidate might also choose to present an artefact for discussion at a meeting. For example a catering candidate may present a menu for discussion or a finished product.

The written records of the meeting used for assessment purposes must be accurate in content and suitable for wider distribution.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE When preparing instruments of assessment it is important to remember that this unit is aimed at candidates in a practical setting. However, the issue should be complex and the range of language skills varied. Tutor input could come in the form of discussion of the conventions of various documents and providing examples of pro-formas, blank and completed, sample reports and sample letters.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Outcome 1

The document produced is likely to be produced over a period of time. It should be appropriate in layout and format with varied language use suitable to purpose and audience.

Outcome 2

The oral presentation should be delivered to a group who have been given a role as members of the audience. It should reflect the needs of a vocational situation.

Outcome 3

While the structure of the group discussion may be not be absolutely formal the appropriate language and interaction should be used.

The document produced must be suitable for distribution.

REFERENCES

1. Guide to unit writing, SQA, 1993 (Code: A018).
2. Guide to assessment, SQA, 1993 (Code: B005).
3. Guide to certification, SQA, 1996 (Code: F025).
4. Notes for unit writers, SQA, 1995 (Code: A041).

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