

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Office Practice: An Activity Approach (Access 3)
NUMBER	D521 09
CLUSTER	Business (Access 3)

SUMMARY

This unit is designed to give candidates real and practical experience in a simulated working office environment.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Examine personal suitability for the vocational area.
- 2 Identify health and safety regulations and safe working practices.
- 3 Identify the main features of the work station.
- 4 Carry out a series of tasks under supervision.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Access 3.

Administrative Information

Superclass:	AY
Publication date:	November 1999
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	02

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CORE SKILLS

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete core skills for the unit	None	
Core skills components for the unit	Critical Thinking	Acc 3
	Planning and Organising	Acc 3

Additional information about core skills is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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

OUTCOME 1

Examine personal suitability for the vocational area.

Performance criteria

- (a) Identification of essential requirements for an employee in terms of the candidate's experience.
- (b) Identification of own personal skills, attributes and interests is realistic.
- (c) Conclusion arrived at about personal suitability for the occupation is realistic.

Evidence requirements

Generated from the candidate's answers in a personal interview or from responses to short answer questions and the use of a checklist. If necessary, this can be supported by the use of visual aids and written answers to questions.

OUTCOME 2

Identify health and safety regulations and safe working practices.

Performance criteria

- (a) Identification of safe working practices is accurate in terms of the occupation.
- (b) Identification of the importance of safe working practices is consistent with the nature of the workplace.

Evidence requirements

Evidence in the form of completion items or responses to short answer questions to a given case study, either pictorial or descriptive.

OUTCOME 3

Identify the main features of the work situation.

Performance criteria

- (a) Identification of main functions of the workplace is accurate.
- (b) Identification of essential equipment and facilities is accurate.

Evidence requirements

Evidence for all performance criteria should be gathered from the candidate responses. The candidate should be allowed to provide evidence in his or her usual form of communication. This can be done through written work supported by oral questioning and the use of a checklist. Written work can include multiple choice questions, or written answers to short answer questions. Oral evidence can be provided through personal interviews.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 4

Carry out a series of tasks under supervision.

Performance criteria

- (a) Sequencing, timing and organisation of tasks is correct.
- (b) All tasks are carried out in a manner compatible with the ethos of the work environment.
- (c) A tidy workstation is maintained and operating and safety procedures are followed at all times.

Note on range for the outcome

Tasks: using a telephone, reception, filing, photocopying and handling incoming and outgoing mail.

Evidence requirements

<i>Task</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Using a telephone	Completed message; telephone log; observation checklist.
Reception	Observation checklist; identifying procedures to be followed and resources required to operate effectively in a reception area; visitors' book.
Filing	Personal interview to explain 2 different forms of filing. Evidence will be generated from candidate responses and an observation checklist of candidate demonstrating filing.
Photocopying	Two copies of a multi-page document, collated and stapled; a document reduced in size and a document enlarged in size.
Handling incoming and outgoing mail	An observation checklist for both incoming and outgoing mail as well as hard copy of any postage records kept; personal interview and/or practical exercise to test the candidate's knowledge and understanding of methods of posting and classes of mail.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This unit would ideally be set in an simulated office environment. However, if this is not possible, all tasks should take place in a situation which attempts to reproduce the conditions and demands of the workplace.

Outcome 1

Ideally, the working environment should be realistic, to enable the candidate to develop an awareness of his or her suitability to the vocational area.

Candidates must analyse their suitability to the vocational area. They must take account of how their contribution affects the quality and success of the work undertaken. They will be expected to examine and assess the effects of their attitude and behaviour in achieving tasks successfully.

Outcome 2

Candidates should develop a working knowledge of the health and safety regulations and safe working practices in a work environment. Their understanding will help them to appreciate why there is a need for these regulations and, more specifically, why there are specific regulations governing their office environment. They should be able to identify hazards and know why reporting hazards is important.

In particular, candidates should be introduced to the following aspects of health and safety and safe working practices of the office environment: safe use of VDUs; safe use of electric and lighting appliances; importance of tidiness to reduce hazards; fire, emergency and health and safety procedures; first aid box; members of staff with first aid training.

Outcome 3

Candidates should be introduced to office procedures. Staffing, accommodation and office furniture and machinery should all be examined when discussing the office. The candidate should also develop a good knowledge of the services that an office provides. Particular attention should be paid to the machinery and equipment which will be used in Outcome 2 with which candidates will be familiar.

Outcome 4

Candidates should be introduced to the safe use of a variety of office machinery and equipment:

- telephones and fax machines
- computers and typewriters, if available
- card indexes, filing cabinets, both vertical and horizontal
- photocopiers, staplers, hole punches, collators, if available
- postal equipment - weighing machines and franking machines, if available

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In undertaking tasks, candidates should follow correct procedures and make effective use of stationery and office sundries.

Candidates should understand the need to develop good working relations with others. They should be involved in working as part of a team wherever possible.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

All learning should take place in an office-type environment. The teacher/lecturer should adopt the role of supervisor and the candidate that of an employee. Wherever possible and practical, work placement should be arranged. However, it is possible to simulate the office environment within the school or college situation. Candidates should be encouraged to adopt a positive attitude towards their work and to take responsibility for it. They should be encouraged to take decisions within the limits of their job responsibilities.

All tasks should be realistic and should encourage the candidate to meet deadlines and to develop the skill of prioritising work. The teacher/lecturer may have to assert some pressure on the candidate by, for example, placing a time restriction upon the successful completion of a task.

Candidates will be encouraged to develop skills that are integral to working in an office, including proof-reading, spelling, punctuation, resourcing and referencing of materials.

Throughout this unit, candidates should be encouraged to assess their own performance. Personal interviews and the use of checklists will provide the opportunity to analyse the candidate's assessment and draw conclusions regarding their suitability for the vocational area.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1

Oral responses to a personal interview/short answer questions and a checklist.

Outcome 2

Completion items or short answer responses to case study material.

Outcome 3

Written evidence in the form of short answer questions or multiple choice questions, or oral evidence gathered from a personal interview.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 4

Task	Evidence
Using a telephone	Completed message; telephone log; observation checklist.
Reception	Observation checklist; visitors' book.
Filing	Oral responses from a personal interview and an observation checklist of candidate demonstrating filing.
Photocopying	Two copies of a multi-page document, collated and stapled; a document reduced in size and a document enlarged in size.
Handling incoming and outgoing mail	An observation checklist for both incoming and outgoing mail as well as hard copy of any postage records kept; oral responses and/or practical exercise to test knowledge and understanding.

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 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/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).