National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: FR26 11

Superclass:	PM
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Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	02

Summary

The purpose of this Unit is to enable candidates to develop an understanding of what volunteering is and the benefits of volunteering to themselves as volunteers. They will consider the aims of volunteering organisations and the benefits that engaging volunteers can bring to different types of VIO (Volunteer Involving Organisations), the benefits of volunteering to the wider community and plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

The Unit is suitable for a range of candidates. These could be school and college candidates, people wishing to develop and improve their employability skills in preparation for seeking work, or people seeking to improve other skills and learn through volunteering. School and college candidates undertaking this award are likely to be undertaking some type of volunteering as part of their overall learning experience. It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing this Unit will be able to progress to further study or volunteering work.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Award in Volunteering Skills at SCQF level 5 but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

Outcomes

1 Describe objectives of volunteering and Volunteer Involving Organisations and the role they play in the community/community of interest.
2 Describe the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer, the Volunteer Involving Organisation and the wider society.
3 Plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

National Unit specification: general information (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

Recommended entry

There are no specific entry requirements for this Unit. It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing the Unit will be able to progress to further study or volunteering work.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*)

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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

♦ Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5
♦ Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

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 SQA.

Outcome 1

Describe the objectives of volunteering and Volunteer Involving Organisations, and the role they play in the community/community of interest.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe clearly what volunteering means.
(b) Describe different types of Volunteer Involving Organisations and their role in relation to the community/community of interest.
(c) Describe the role of volunteers and of Volunteer Involving Organisations.
(d) Describe frontline and leadership activities or services provided by a Volunteer Involving Organisation.

Outcome 2

Describe the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer, the Volunteer Involving Organisation and the wider society.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify why people undertake volunteer roles.
(b) Describe the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and the Volunteer Involving Organisation.
(c) Describe the benefits of volunteering to wider society.

Outcome 3

Plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify clearly, through an initial assessment, strengths, weaknesses, skills, attributes, experience, interests and motivations.
(b) Describe a volunteer opportunity which matches own skills, and motivation.
(c) Identify goals which match requirements of the VIO and the volunteer.
(d) Prepare and carry out a detailed plan to prepare for a volunteer placement.
(e) Explain the role to be undertaken during the volunteering placement in relation to the aims of the VIO.
(f) Describe expectations of both the volunteer and the volunteer placement provider.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. The evidence will be generated holistically throughout the Unit, under open-book conditions, and will comprise:

Outcome 1

♦ A clear definition of volunteering, giving one example.
♦ A description of three types of VIO — to include voluntary, statutory, and private, giving at least two of each, identifying their main role and their contribution to the wider community/community of interest.
♦ A description of at least three possible volunteering roles.
♦ A description of two frontline services or activities and one leadership activity provided by two identified VIOs.

Outcome 2

♦ Identification of at least two reasons why people undertake volunteering roles.
♦ Description of at least two benefits of volunteering to the volunteer, two benefits to VIOs and two benefits to the wider community.

Outcome 3

♦ Self-assessment identifying the candidate's own qualities, skills, attitudes, experience, and motivation for volunteering.
♦ Description of a matching volunteering opportunity, and the VIO in which the opportunity is based.
♦ Description of one volunteer opportunity, how it fits in with the candidate`s self-assessment.
♦ Explanation of how the volunteering role contributes to the aims of the VIO.
♦ Identification of the candidate's goals and expectations in undertaking the placement.
♦ Preparing and carrying out a detailed plan which must include as a minimum:
  — A feasible time plan
  — Completion of a CV or completed application form
  — Finding out about aims and role of the VIO
  — Obtaining volunteer role/task description
  — Contacting the VIO by making a telephone call/email and in person
  — Finding out about practicalities — transport and hours of work
  — Identification of basic expectations of the VIO
  — Participating in a volunteer opportunity interview

The candidate will be given a suitable template to enable the production of the evidence required for self-assessment.

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

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

In this Unit candidates will develop knowledge and understanding of what volunteering is, enable candidates to understand its benefits to the individual and society and understand why Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) engage volunteers. Candidates will plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who have no previous experience of volunteering, or for candidates who have some volunteering experience. These could be school, and college candidates, people wishing to develop and improve their employability skills in preparation for seeking work, or people seeking to improve other skills and learn through volunteering.

The Unit will give individuals the opportunity to gain a national qualification which recognises their contribution to volunteering and the learning they gain as a result of being involved in activities additional to their formal learning. The Unit will link naturally to the development of essential skills, employability skills, transferable skills, active citizenship and the development of the skills and attributes of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence (to enable candidates to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors).

Outcome 1

Initial input from the tutor and group discussions could be used to introduce the term of volunteering. From this a generally well considered definition could be developed. There is no one common national definition; however the Scottish Executive (2006) published a definition 'Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, the environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary.'

Candidates could then explore any volunteering opportunities/organisations that they are aware of in their local communities and explore the role they play in the community. This could be achieved by group or individual local investigation, with the use of the internet for research, or through their own prior knowledge or experience. Through this activity candidates should be able to identify and describe different types of VIOs, eg `VIOs are organisations that provide volunteering opportunities for prospective volunteers. Three categories of VIO are voluntary, private and statutory.' and give examples.

Information relating to frontline and leadership services or activities of the VIOs could be achieved through these activities.

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

♦ **Voluntary organisations**
Volunteering opportunities are widely available through many associations, eg Spina Bifida Association, housing associations, organisations such as WRVS (formerly the Women's Royal Voluntary Service), charity shops, credit unions, sports groups, community such as mentoring and counselling services to people with addictions, environmental groups, uniformed youth groups, religious organisations, college opportunities such as peer mentoring, student associations, class reps.

♦ **Statutory organisations**
Many statutory organisations such as the NHS and Local Authorities encourage volunteer involvement (eg as car drivers, ward visitors, on parent councils, paired reading schemes).

♦ **Private**
While it is less common for private companies to engage members of the public as volunteers in the workplace, it is becoming more common to have employer supported volunteering schemes, where they encourage their own employees to do volunteering in their local community, eg RBS (Employee Volunteering Companies).

During initial research into the private sector, candidates could research the term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) which would help develop an understanding of some of the roles of this sector within volunteering. CRS involves companies becoming increasingly accountable for their social and environmental impact as well as how well they perform financially. CSR involves among other things:
— Environmental responsibilities
— Community investment (including employer supported volunteering).

The above lists are not exhaustive.

The roles of volunteers in all three categories are huge and again during the exploration of the three sectors, this activity could generate the required information on roles, as well as generating the necessary information on roles of the VIO and their contribution to the wider community.

The concept of a Community of interest should be introduced — groups who share an identity, eg people with disabilities. A social enterprise can be a community of interest.

Outcome 2

Interviews and other opportunities to talk with volunteers and volunteer involving organisation employees could be used to find out why people volunteer.

Discussion and some input from tutor along with visits and speakers can help to give an insight into the main benefits of volunteering to the volunteer, the VIO and the wider community/community of interest. Benefits could include:

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

For the volunteer

♦ Personal and career development
♦ Routes to paid employment
♦ Free training
♦ Goal setting
♦ Increased confidence and self-esteem
♦ Access to greater social networks
♦ Information and understanding on local issues/community
♦ Sense of achievement
♦ Getting into a routine
♦ Better health

For the VIO

♦ Increases capacity
♦ Allows greater flexibility
♦ May give more geographical coverage
♦ Scope for development and experimentation
♦ Contributes to the ethos of the organisation
♦ Adds a new dimension
♦ Brings in new skills
♦ Contributes to the ethos of the organisation
♦ Employees value the organisation more
♦ Greater representation and influence from the community/into the community it serves

For the wider community

♦ Increases capacity of the wider community
♦ Increases skill development
♦ Increases social interaction
♦ Increases social cohesion
♦ Increase in caring attitudes
♦ Increased success
♦ Greater mobility
♦ Inclusive approach to community members
♦ Adds value

This list is not exhaustive. Candidates should also become familiar with the concept of the Volunteering Exchange — making a contribution while at the same time developing their own skills and interests — in order to support their learning on the benefits of volunteering to them as individuals.

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

Outcome 3

A self-assessment template could be used to help the candidate identify their qualities, skills, attitudes, experience, interests and motivation to volunteer. The resultant self-assessment can be used to identify a volunteering opportunity which matches their identified skills, interests and motivation.

There are many self-assessment templates and information on goal-setting available on the Internet, eg Skills Development Scotland and Planit Plus.

Goals should then be set which match the requirements of the volunteer role and the VIO.

Tutor support may be required to make initial contact with volunteer organisation, but this should be kept to a minimum. Tutors may give basic guidance in the production of a plan to prepare for a volunteering placement. This could involve preparing for selection process once volunteer opportunities have been identified, eg:

♦   Completing application form and CV
♦   Finding information on volunteer placement
♦   Preparing for interview — dress code, transport to venue
♦   Formulating questions to enable the candidate to obtain the necessary information
♦   Rehearsing answers to typical questions — this could be done through simulation

Roles and expectations of volunteer placement and those of candidates should be clarified at interview stage. Health and safety issues, risk assessment and PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) issues should also be addressed.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

A balance between tutor presentation and a candidate centred approach should be adopted throughout this Unit. This could involve activities such as:

♦   Group discussions
♦   Use of internet
♦   Input from guest speaker, such as existing volunteers, representatives for volunteer agencies and VIOs, visits to VIO.
♦   Simulation for selection preparation
♦   DVD recording of interviews
♦   Completion of application form
♦   Completion of PVG Check, if applicable

This Unit will link naturally to the development of essential skills, employability skills, and active citizenship and should provide candidates with an opportunity to develop the following skills for life, learning and work:

♦   Self-awareness and improvement — by carrying out a self-assessment, measuring own performance and goal setting.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

♦   Independent thinking and informed decision — by making decisions about own strengths/weaknesses/attributes, experience/interests and motivation, goal setting, and making decisions on which VIO and role is best suited to the individual.
♦   Career development — carrying out self-assessment will provide an understanding of development needs, strengths, interests and motivation; research into VIO and volunteer roles will provide an understanding of possible careers, roles in the VIO and progression routes.
♦   Citizenship and community involvement — research, visits and guest speakers will provide understanding of roles and contributions to VIO, community/community of interest.
♦   Interpersonal skills — through group work, interviews and interaction with others in VIO.
♦   Diversity — through research, interviews and visits to VIO.
♦   Appreciation of values and beliefs — by understanding the roles of the VIOs, added value to the community and increased social awareness.
♦   Self-management — by producing a detailed plan to prepare for volunteer opportunity.

It should be noted that volunteering has a cultural context and for candidates/learners of other nationalities, there may be no similar context of volunteering or it may have very different connotations which may prove to be a barrier to inclusion. Where this is the case, learning and teaching approaches should address these issues to ensure understanding prior to assessment tasks being undertaken.

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

There are possibilities for a range of assessment methods. The Unit lends itself to holistic assessment through the compilation of a portfolio of evidence which could comprise some or all of the following elements:

♦   Candidate notes
♦   E-mails
♦   Template for self-assessment
♦   Volunteer task/job descriptions
♦   Volunteer application form
♦   Recordings of interviews (simulation)
♦   Assessor observation checklists
♦   Diaries
♦   Photographs

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003), SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005).*

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will develop an understanding of what volunteering is and the benefits of volunteering to themselves as volunteers. They will also consider the benefits that engaging volunteers can bring to different types of VIO (Volunteer Involving Organisations), and the benefits of volunteering to the wider community, and plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

Candidates will:

♦   find out about volunteering and volunteering organisations
♦   describe the benefits of volunteering to themselves and VIOs
♦   explore the benefits of volunteering to the wider community/community of interest
♦   carry out a self assessment
♦   match skills and motivation to a volunteering opportunity and to the aims of a VIO
♦   identify goals and expectations
♦   plan for a volunteering opportunity
♦   produce a CV
♦   participate in an interview situation.

As candidates are doing this Unit there may be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5.

In addition whilst completing this Unit candidates may develop aspects of the following Core Skills where specific learning and teaching approaches are adopted:

Working with Others: through participation in discussion and group work.

Information and Communication Technology: through use of internet for research and investigation of VIOs in the local area; to complete a CV.

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**

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5 embedded.	30/09/2011