



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: FR28 11

Superclass: PM

Publication date: August 2011

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Summary

The purpose of this Unit is to develop candidates' personal skills by providing them with the opportunity to undertake an investigation into an aspect of volunteering in which they have a particular interest. Candidates will develop a project plan, implement the investigation and review and present the investigation findings, relating this to possible future volunteering activity.

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 unit 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 within the Award in Volunteering Skills (SCQF level 5) but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit should prepare candidates for progression to further study or volunteering work.

Outcomes

- 1 Plan and carry out an investigation of an aspect of volunteering of particular interest to the candidate and of potential benefit to a Volunteer Involving Organisation.
- 2 Contribute to a review of the investigation project.
- 3 Explain the outcomes of the investigation project.

National Unit specification: general information (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

Preparing to Volunteer (SCQF level 5).
Volunteering Experience (SCQF level 5).

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

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

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

Communication (SCQF level 5).
Problem Solving (SCQF level 5).

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

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

Plan and carry out an investigation of an aspect of volunteering of particular interest to the candidate and potential benefit to a Volunteering Involving Organisation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify a range of aspects of volunteering of potential benefit to a VIO on which to focus an investigation.
- (b) Select an aspect to investigate based on cost-benefit analysis of the possible investigation topics.
- (c) Develop a detailed investigation project plan.
- (d) Undertake the investigation according to the plan.

Outcome 2

Contribute to a review of the investigation project.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Contribute to an investigation project review meeting.
- (b) Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of the investigation project.

Outcome 3

Present the outcomes of the investigation project.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Provide a comprehensive report on the findings of the investigation.
- (b) Evaluate the potential benefit to the VIO of the investigation findings.
- (c) Evaluate own self development through the investigation project.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The evidence will be generated by the candidate under open-book conditions, with support from the tutor at appropriate points throughout the Unit and should include:

Outcome 1

- ◆ Identification of 3–5 possible volunteering aspects which could be of potential benefit to a VIO.
- ◆ Selection of one investigation topic based on a cost-benefit analysis which includes an explanation of how the investigation project could benefit both candidate and the VIO. At least three personal development benefits must be given.
- ◆ A detailed project plan which is flexible and feasible in relation to time and resources available.
- ◆ A record showing how the project plan was carried out.

Outcome 2

- ◆ Contribution to an interim review meeting, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses and at least two areas for improvement identified in carrying out the project investigation project.

Outcome 3

Outcomes of investigation should be presented in a logical and clear manner and should include:

- ◆ Description of the volunteering aspect investigated.
- ◆ Explanation of the investigation process.
- ◆ Detailed investigation findings.
- ◆ Evaluation of the project planning and implementation incorporating feedback from review meeting.
- ◆ Evaluation of at least two areas of personal progress made during the project. Where no personal progression has been made an explanation should be given.
- ◆ Evaluation of at least one benefit the project may produce for the VIO. Where no benefit can be identified an explanation should be given.

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

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 is suitable for candidates who have participated in a volunteering role and have a sound understanding of what volunteering entails. This Unit should prepare candidates for progression to further study or volunteering work.

In this Unit candidates are required to investigate an aspect of volunteering and develop a project in order to develop their own skills/knowledge and potentially contribute to benefiting the VIO.

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

The range of possibilities for investigation projects within VIOs is extensive. Candidates would be expected to identify an area they have an interest in as a result of working in a VIO and research into how this would contribute to benefiting the VIO would be expected. It is important that the tutor is able to focus candidate choice on an investigation topic that ensures the investigation undertaken will lead to a viable investigation with sufficient scope.

Examples of project topics could include such areas as:

- ◆ Fund raising activity carried out by VOIs
- ◆ PR activity carried out by VOIs
- ◆ Career development
- ◆ Individual VIO needs
- ◆ Meeting VIO client needs
- ◆ Increasing VIO awareness
- ◆ Increasing opportunities for VIO partnerships.

This list is not exhaustive.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

Outcome 2

Candidates should contribute to discussion with the assessor to evaluate the investigation project. They should be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of how the investigation project was planned and implemented and any potential or actual benefits for themselves and for the VIO. A detailed strength and weakness matrix could be produced for this purpose. Candidates should be able to respond positively to feedback and act on any points discussed to enhance findings.

Outcome 3

This Outcome pulls together the completed project and allows the candidate to reflect on the Outcome 2 discussion and incorporate this review into the overall investigation findings. At this stage they will reflect on their own personal development and the possible benefits their investigation could have for the VIO.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

Supervisory support from the tutor should be adopted for the candidate to complete this Unit.

This could be complemented by activities such as:

- ◆ Small group discussions
- ◆ Tutor led discussions
- ◆ Discussion and guidance on producing a Cost-Benefit analysis
- ◆ SWOT analyses
- ◆ Johari Windows
- ◆ Project planning activities
- ◆ Input from guest speakers such as existing volunteers representatives from VIO and or visits to VIO
- ◆ Use of Internet
- ◆ Peer/Assessor reviews of investigation project.

This Unit should provide candidates with an opportunity to develop the following skills for life, learning and work:

- ◆ Self awareness and improvement — by identifying own personal progression.
- ◆ Citizenship — by developing understanding of the work of VIOs.
- ◆ Confidence — through undertaking the investigation, and contributing to a meeting.
- ◆ Self Management — by following through the objectives of investigation project.
- ◆ Critical thinking — by identifying strengths and weakness of investigation project.
- ◆ Independent thinking — through developing the investigation project.
- ◆ Appreciation of values and beliefs — through reflecting on the work of VIOs.
- ◆ Informed decision making — by responding positively to feedback.
- ◆ Reviewing and Evaluating — through presentation of findings and self development.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

It should be noted that volunteering has a cultural context and for students/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

A holistic approach to assessment across Outcomes is recommended. Written and/ or oral evidence may be produced in a variety of formats to produce a folio of evidence. This could include for example:

- ◆ Candidate written records
- ◆ Recording of interviews
- ◆ E-mails
- ◆ Blogs
- ◆ Observation checklists
- ◆ Professional witness testimonies
- ◆ Production/completion of appropriate documentation
- ◆ Electronic presentations
- ◆ Electronic journals
- ◆ Log books
- ◆ Diaries
- ◆ Videos
- ◆ Photographs

It is expected that tutors would give support as required and provide candidates with a checklist for their folio of evidence.

For Outcome 1 the area of interest selected for investigation should be one which will help candidates to develop their own personal skills and which also has the potential to contribute to benefitting a VIO. In agreement with the assessor, the final option for investigation should be chosen giving valid reasons for choice using information from cost /benefit analysis.

A comprehensive project should be developed. Investigation should then be undertaken. A logbook could be maintained throughout the investigation.

In relation to Outcome 2, candidates could complete a strengths and weaknesses matrix for the project to facilitate reflection on the investigation process. Candidates should take account of feedback and evidence this by incorporating it in the final presentation of findings in Outcome 3. The review meeting and identification of areas for improvement could also be evidenced in an action plan/ diary/video/observation checklists or any other appropriate way. Tutors could use an observation checklist to record the meeting.

In relation to Outcome 3, detailed findings of investigation project and self development should be clearly presented. A clear evaluation of any actual or potential benefits to the VIO should be included as well as a clear evaluation of two areas of self developments.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

Investigation findings could be presented in the form of a diary, to do lists, portfolios, e-portfolios, videos, scrapbook, presentation, reports, etc. Appropriate observation checklists and folio checklist should be included.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment of aspects of the investigation which do not comply with the Evidence Requirements.

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)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will apply their understanding of Volunteering and VIOs to the investigation of a specific aspect of volunteering in which they have developed a particular interest and which has the potential to benefit a VIO as well as the candidate.

Candidates will:

- ◆ use their knowledge of volunteering to identify a range of possible investigation topics
- ◆ justify their choice of investigation topic
- ◆ carry out a cost-benefit analysis
- ◆ plan and carry out the investigation
- ◆ keep a record of the investigation process
- ◆ participate in and contribute to a review meeting
- ◆ communicate their findings
- ◆ review and evaluate their project
- ◆ describe their own development
- ◆ identify potential benefits to a VIO.

This means that as candidates are doing this Unit will have 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 (ICT): through use of internet for research and investigation of the project topic.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering Investigative Project

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2011

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre, telephone 0845 279 1000.