



## National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

**Unit code:** H97X 46

**Superclass:** AL

**Publication date:** September 2015

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02 (May 2016)

### Unit purpose

This Unit is a mandatory Unit within the Financial Services Award at SCQF level 6 and is also available as a free-standing Unit. It is suitable for learners who wish to pursue a career in Financial Services or for those already employed in the sector.

This Unit is designed to give learners an appreciation of the importance of communicating effectively and appropriately within the Financial Services sector. They will develop knowledge and skills relating to communication protocols that exist covering written communication, oral communication, face-to-face communication and online communication (including social media).

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Produce documents.
- 2 Respond to customer enquiries for financial products/services.
- 3 Participate in a meeting.

### Credit points and level

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

### Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ English/Communication/Literacy at SCQF level 5 or above.
- ◆ Relevant knowledge and experience of working in the Financial Services sector.

## National Unit specification: General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

### Core Skills

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

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4 Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4

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

### 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.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

### Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## **National Unit specification: Statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

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**

Produce documents.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Produce an internal document using appropriate format and language for a given business situation.
- (b) Produce an item of customer correspondence adhering to appropriate format/legal requirements.
- (c) Manage documents/information adhering to security and confidentiality requirements.
- (d) Store documents/data in accordance with organisational procedures.

### **Outcome 2**

Respond to customer enquiries for financial products/services.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify the methods used to communicate with customers.
- (b) Use protocols and professional etiquette when communicating with customers online.
- (c) Use language, register and tone effectively.
- (d) Respond to customer enquiries using an appropriate communication method.

### **Outcome 3**

Participate in a meeting.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Produce the documents used to facilitate a formal meeting.
- (b) Outline the procedures that are used to facilitate formal meetings including the role of the chairperson and secretary.
- (c) Participate in a formal meeting relating to a financial product/service.

## **National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

### **Evidence Requirements for this Unit**

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of activities and presented in a variety of different formats to demonstrate that the learner has met the requirements of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

In the case of assessment by observation or oral questioning, evidence should include assessor comments and other relevant evidence that shows clearly the basis on which assessment judgements have been made.

There are opportunities to combine some assessments.

#### **Outcome 1**

Learners should:

- ◆ Produce an internal business document (minimum 100 words) that adheres to organisational requirements in terms of format and language.
- ◆ Produce a piece of customer correspondence using structure/language/format/legal requirements appropriate to a given situation.
- ◆ Manage documents/information adhering to security and confidentiality requirements.
- ◆ Store documents/data in accordance with organisational procedures.

#### **Outcome 2**

Learners should:

- ◆ Identify appropriate communication methods/channels to respond to customer needs.
- ◆ Respond to a customer enquiry for a financial product/service using an online method of communication.
- ◆ Respond to a customer enquiry for a financial product/service face-to-face or by telephone using a customer centric approach.
- ◆ Use online protocols and professional etiquette when communicating with customers.
- ◆ Use language, register and tone effectively.

#### **Outcome 3**

Learners should:

- ◆ Prepare a notice and agenda for a formal meeting.
- ◆ Outline the role of the chairperson and secretary along with the procedures used to facilitate formal meetings.
- ◆ Participate in a formal meeting relating to a financial product/service.
- ◆ Produce minutes from a meeting.



## National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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 has been designed to form part of the group award in Financial Services. However, it may be taken as a stand-alone Unit for learners who wish to develop their communication skills in a Financial Services environment.

The Unit offers learners the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills relating to the various forms of communication that take place within contemporary Financial Services organisations.

In designing the Unit, recognition has been given to the varying forms of communication methods that take place within a modern organisational setting, as well as the expectation that within Financial Services settings there is a strong emphasis on accuracy, legality, confidentiality and professional standards.

In Outcome 1 the focus is on formal written communication that occurs both internally and externally, and learners should be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the types of documents that are commonly used by Financial Services organisations to communicate internally and externally.

For example, learners may have to send an internal communication to colleagues relating to the updating of processes, legal requirements, changes to rates, etc. Requests for training, updates to web pages and return to work forms are also examples of internal communications. Email is the most common form of written internal communication.

In addition, the Outcome will introduce learners to the types of documents that are frequently issued to customers in response to requests for information, perhaps in relation to the terms of a particular product/service. The use of templates and house style is important in portraying the organisation's image with external customers. Learners may use a mail merge process to create external documents. However, mail merge is normally used to create a set of documents going to many customers. Contact details and any disclaimers should be included as appropriate.

Learners could be made aware of the different organisations that deliver mail for businesses such as Royal Mail, DHL, TNT, UPS, etc.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

Learners should produce documents ensuring that security and confidentiality requirements are adhered to. For example, no confidential information, whether in hard copy or on-screen should be left for others to view. Learners should follow procedures such as logging off, use of screen savers, passwords, encryption of pen drives, filing/scanning hard copies, shredding of confidential information or placing in secure waste bags.

Learners should learn about storing electronic/paper information. The use of servers, folders, naming conventions for documents should be covered along with length of time information should be kept.

Outcome 2 focuses on the variety of communication methods/channels that are widely used to communicate with customers; including the use of social media, web chats and text based methods. Particular importance is given to the acceptable etiquettes and protocols that should be followed when using less formal communication approaches. For example, the use of block capitals, text language and emoticons are not appropriate when communicating on behalf of an organisation. Emphasis should be placed on the maintenance of professionalism even when using channels more commonly perceived as informal. For example, learners may be given the opportunity to transfer information from one media to another whilst retaining the professional standards expected of the organisation and the principles of the original source.

Learners should recognise that it is important to consider the audience's needs when communicating both in writing and orally. Learners should ensure that they give customers/audience enough information so they are able to understand. 'Register' refers to the forms of language a speaker uses for a particular setting. For example, the language used for a formal meeting must be appropriate to its purpose. 'Tone' refers to the mood set — again the tone used must be appropriate to the purpose. A flippant tone should not be used for a serious discussion.

Outcome 3 will allow learners to become familiar with the conventions that are used to facilitate formal meetings; including the role of the chairperson, the secretary, the recording of the meeting, as well as the protocols that exist to ensure managed proceedings and productive outcomes.

The use of agendas, preparatory documentation and minutes should be used and this may take the form of a meeting that relates to a change to a product/service or a change in customer policy. The aforementioned documentation can be used by learners to undertake a short meeting that is designed to reach an agreed objective and these proceedings should be recorded appropriately with the formal recording of minutes, actions and follow-up. In order to reflect the contemporary forms that meetings may take, learners should be introduced to a variety of ways that meeting arrangements may be conducted, for example via webinars/Skype, etc.

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner-centred, participative and practical in nature. It is recommended that there be a balance between whole-class teaching and activity based learning, with an activity approach being used to enable learners to develop all the relevant communication and IT skills effectively.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

In Outcome 1 sample documents could be provided showing good/poor format and language prior to learners creating internal and external communication items. Learners will be familiar with the storage of their own electronic documents within their centre but should be made aware of records management policies covering hard copy, electronic and digital formats and emails.

For Outcome 2, scenarios which allow learners to meet the needs of customers using a variety of communication methods should be used. This would enable learners to make adjustments when communicating information to ensure the information is received and understood. It is important that learners use language, register and tone effectively and that when communicating online that protocols are followed.

Centres may create databases with product/service details and customer details on which scenarios can be based. Learners could access the database to respond to enquiries from customers.

It may be possible to integrate the delivery of this Outcome with Outcomes 2–4 of *Financial Services: Promoting Positive Customer Relationships* (H97Y 46).

For Outcome 3, learners could participate in meetings, ensuring that all procedures are adhered to. For example, sufficient notice is given of the meeting with agenda and minutes of previous meeting, along with other relevant documentation, sent out in sufficient time prior to the meeting. Learners could take turns at chairing meetings and acting as secretary so they learn about the roles these people carry out.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

For **Outcome 1** learners may produce an email to their team members outlining the next training session due to be delivered or a new business process which is being introduced. Organisational house style should be used in the creation of the email and the email should contain all relevant information. Alternatively, the learner could produce an agenda or minutes for an internal meeting — this would allow some evidence to be produced for Outcome 3.

When producing the response to a customer's request for product information the learner should use structure/language/format/legal requirements appropriate to the situation. The response may involve the use of an organisational template/pro forma with the learner infilling information such as salutation, complimentary close, contact details, as well as product/service details. A mail merge process may be used to produce the documents. The presentation of the final document should be fit for purpose, whether the document is being sent electronically or by a mail service.

Learners should follow procedures relating to security and confidentiality of documents and records management procedures should be adhered to when filing/storing documents.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

For **Outcome 2** learners may be presented with different scenarios and decide which method of communication should be used to respond, for example web chats, Facebook, twitter, blogs or a more traditional method.

Learners could employ a suitable method of communication to respond to customer enquiries face-to-face, by telephone or by web chat. Learners should obtain the required information from the customer, making sure the needs of the customer are met. Learners should use open questions to ensure they gather all relevant information from customers. Learners should use the correct protocols and professional etiquette when communicating with customers online. Learners should avoid the use of text language, statements emboldened or in capitals and emoticons in emails to customers

When communicating orally, learners should use language, register and tone appropriate to the situation.

It may be possible to integrate some aspects of the assessment of this Outcome with the delivery of this Outcome with Outcomes 2–4 of *Financial Services: Promoting Positive Customer Relationships* (H97Y 46).

For **Outcome 3**, learners could participate in a formal meeting relating to a financial product/service such as savings and investment accounts or a new insurance product. The documents required for the meeting should be prepared — notice and agenda, minutes of previous meeting if appropriate and any supporting documentation. In addition, the minutes of the meeting should be produced. They should outline the role and duties of the Chairperson and Secretary/note-taker. The learner should contribute to the meeting discussion or take on the role of Chairperson/Secretary.

Centres must ensure that, although learners may produce documents of a similar nature, such documents have been created with the full participation of all learners undertaking the Unit.

Evidence may be generated within the learner's workplace. Alternatively, centres may facilitate a simulated environment within which assessment can be appropriately undertaken.

It is the responsibility of the centre delivering this Unit to ensure the authenticity of learners' work.

### Opportunities for 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 social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).



## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

#### Core Skills

Learners will be producing written and/or oral communication evidence as part of the assessment — this offers opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

Learners will use online communication methods, produce electronic documents and research/locate/store information so will have the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (ICT)*.

As learners may have to make adjustments when communicating information to different audiences they will develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving*.

Learners will also have the opportunity to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Working with Others* during class discussions and when communicating with internal/external customers. If learners have work placements this will further enhance the development of this Core Skill.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4.

#### Other Essential Skills

Learners may be given opportunities to develop key employability skills, as well as develop an awareness and understanding of citizenship and sustainability. These include the skills of:

Communication	Research and investigation
Interpersonal	Positive attitude to work
Flexibility/ability to adapt to different situations	Analysing and Evaluating
ICT	Planning and organising
Team work/group work	Time management
Using initiative/being proactive	Adopting professional working standards and practices
Problem Solving	Knowledge of chosen job or career path
Paying attention to detail	

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for learners

### Unit title: Financial Services: Communication (SCQF level 6)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

Effective communication skills — oral and written — are essential to promote good relationships and effective practice in the Financial Services sector. This Unit focuses on the practical approaches required when communicating with internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, the Unit recognises that modern communication methods incorporate the use of online approaches to customer interaction and this is reflected throughout the learning that will take place.

During the delivery of the Unit you will be introduced to a variety of communication methods that are used to facilitate interaction, both within the organisation and with customers.

In Outcome 1 you will produce commercial documents that will comply with the standards expected within a modern Financial Services organisation; this will require the legal precision of wording as well as compliance with organisational format, style and layout. The accurate production of these documents in hard copy/electronic/digital format will be assessed.

In Outcome 2 you will look at the different methods, including online methods, you can use to communicate with customers. You will respond to customer enquiries by choosing a suitable method.

In Outcome 3 you will participate in a meeting relating to a financial product/service and prepare the necessary documentation.

For Outcomes 2 and 3 of the Unit you will be expected to carry out a number of role-play activities that will give you the opportunity to demonstrate that you have developed the knowledge and skills that are required to communicate effectively in a Financial Services environment. Such role plays will involve face-to-face scenarios (including formal meetings), as well as ones that take place online. Your tutor will supervise these interactions and assess that you have met the required standard.

You will have opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Working with Others*. The Core Skill components of Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4 are embedded in this Unit. In addition, you may develop other employability skills such as time management, use of initiative and positive attitude to work.

Progression from this Unit is on to further/higher education courses, training or employment.