-SQA-SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Module Number-   7110025   -Session- 1995-96

-Superclass-   KB

-Title-   **COMMUNICATION 1 - WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ($x^1/_2$)**

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Reading and writing simple items of communication.

OUTCOMES

1.   demonstrate an understanding of simple written communication on familiar topics;

2.   produce simple written communication.

CREDIT VALUE: 0.5 NC Credit

ACCESS STATEMENT: No formal entry requirements although the module would be appropriate for candidates with 7110001 Skillstart Communication.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

UNIT NUMBER: 7110025

UNIT TITLE: COMMUNICATION 1 - WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

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.   DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF SIMPLE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ON FAMILIAR TOPICS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

   (a)   A correct identification is made of the purpose of a communication with clearly recognisable conventions.
   (b)   An accurate account is given of an important idea or significant piece of information from a communication.
   (c)   An accurate account is given of a clearly stated point of view or explicit feeling from a communication.

RANGE STATEMENT

Type of communication: written communication which combines factual content, with a clearly stated point of view or feeling.

Level of difficulty: all of the vocabulary will be familiar to the candidate; overall the sentences will be very simple in structure; where linkage occurs it will be of a straightforward nature.

Degree of detail: containing several items of information.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Oral and/or written evidence which shows that the candidate has achieved all of the performance criteria and each aspect of the range statement.

The candidate must read a minimum of two examples of the same type of simple written communication. On each occasion the candidate must achieve all of the performance criteria.

OUTCOME

    2.   PRODUCE SIMPLE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

    (a)   The conventions adopted for the communication are mainly appropriate for the writer's purpose and audience.
    (b)   All essential information is presented.
    (c)   Some evidence of structure is discernible in the communication.
    (d)   Syntax, spelling and vocabulary are sufficiently accurate for the writer's meaning to be conveyed.

RANGE STATEMENT

Type of communication: writing which conveys information; writing in which a personal point of view or feeling is discernible.

Level of difficulty: the information conveyed is of a basic nature; simple vocabulary; simple sentence structure.

Degree of detail: containing several items of information.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written evidence which shows that the candidate achieved all of the performance criteria and each aspect of the range statement.

The candidate must produce two pieces of writing which correspond to the specified types of communications. On each occasion the candidate must achieve all of the performance criteria.

ASSESSMENT RECORDS

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 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 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

In certain cases, modified outcomes and range statements can be proposed for certification. See references at end of Support Notes.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE: UNIT SPECIFICATION

SUPPORT NOTES

UNIT NUMBER   7110025

UNIT TITLE   COMMUNICATION 1 - WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

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 20 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE This unit is designed to develop English language skills in reading and writing at a basic level. It should guide the candidate towards the acquisition of broadly-based skills in common language contexts, helping the candidate to establish and maintain social and working relations.

The unit is concerned with the interpretation and use of written English in everyday living and in vocational contexts. It is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of candidates and users, including those involved in adult basic education and, where appropriate, government training programmes.

SQA publishes summaries of NC units for easy reference, publicity purposes, centre handbooks, etc. The summary statement for this unit is as follows:

This unit requires you to study various types of simple writing so that you can understand what their purposes are, and why they have been written in a particular way. You will also be required to produce simple pieces of writing.

CONTENT/CONTEXT Corresponding to Outcomes 1-2:

In a Communication unit, Content/Context is best defined as the situations, media and activities through which the skills related to the outcomes are practised and developed.

This unit should provide opportunities:

-          to use language for a variety of purposes with a balance of productive and receptive uses appropriate to the individual needs of the candidate: eg conveying information; describing thoughts; keeping a record; gathering information; reading for pleasure.

- to use language in a range of personal, social and vocational settings: eg keeping a diary; writing a personal letter; completing an accident report form.

- to read a variety of texts and graphical and pictorial representations which offer a range of reading demands: eg books; newspapers and magazines; mail order catalogues; pamphlets; notices; timetables; advertisements; instructions; graphs; diagrams; tables; charts. Items of written communication suitable for summative assessment will deal with topics which are familiar to the candidate in terms of format, subject, vocabulary and purpose.

- to use a range of written, graphical and pictorial forms: eg notes; memos; personal letters; diaries; logs; posters; sketch maps; annotated sketches; graphs and diagrams; forms; tables; stories and accounts of personal experience.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE   Learning and teaching in Communication must be active and candidate-centred. Candidates should have the opportunity to plan and make decisions for themselves, to show initiative and independence, and to work co-operatively in groups. Induction to the activities should ensure that the candidates have a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of the work.

There should be a variety of activities undertaken, some individual, some in small groups and some with the whole class. These should provide opportunities to use language in real situations for real purposes and may be part of projects or practical exercises set within the communication unit or drawn from activities in other vocational or social contexts.

Teaching groups should be small enough to allow practical activities of this kind to be undertaken, and to allow candidates to be involved in activities which stretch their capabilities and offer both the chance of success and the risk of failure.

It is recommended that Communication should be timetabled in blocks of time which are long enough to allow candidates to engage in realistic combinations of communication skills both in and out of the centre.

The provision of opportunities for reworking, reviewing, revising and evaluating by the candidate, by peers and by the tutor/trainer, should be seen as an essential feature of all formative activities.

Units of work in Communication should be designed to engage candidates in the varied and purposeful use of inter-related skills of language. Units can be of variable length and may allow for several different learning and teaching approaches. It is recommended that these units should be negotiated and planned in such a way that the evidence required for assessment is generated in the course of ongoing work rather than as a separate and discrete exercise.

Group work is to be encouraged as it gives candidates practical experience of the co-operation necessary in real life, particularly in vocational situations. However, work completed by candidates as members of a group or in a group project should be carried out without the aid of other members of the group where this work is to be submitted as evidence for that candidate's summative assessment.

Combining Communication with Other Units: The content of other units which a candidate is taking can be drawn on to provide activities which involve the practice and development of communication skills. Communication units may be devised which are cross-modular and aim to develop communication skills in contexts drawn from other units. It is also possible to combine a Communication unit with another unit to create an enhanced learning and teaching programme. For example, a Communication unit could be combined with a PSD unit to provide particular contexts for the development of communication skills. In such a case, adequate time must be allowed to ensure that all important aspects of both units can be covered.

Because Communication 1 is a core skill for the GSVQ level I it is important that as far as possible the particular vocational emphasis of the course should be reflected in the teaching of the Communication components. It is also important that Communication tutors/trainers' work with colleagues from other subject/vocational areas to devise assessment opportunities that will permit assessment across modules.

Open Enrolment; Open enrolment procedures do not apply to Communication level 1 units.

N.B. The statement of evidence requirements for each outcome indicates the minimum required for the purpose of summative assessment. However, the nature and number of activities undertaken by the candidate should not be limited to those specified.

Tutor/trainer Support: Tutors/trainers should distinguish between their differing roles in formative and summative assessment. In the former, as much help and support as is required by the candidate may legitimately be given by the tutor/trainer. Tasks which are intended to provide evidence for summative assessment must be completed by the candidate unaided. However, it would be acceptable for the tutor/trainer to draw the candidate's attention to any general area of error in relation to particular performance criteria or to redirect him or her to the task in hand.

Use of Dictionaries: This should be encouraged at all stages. Communication modules enable an 'open-book' policy to be adopted by centres as far as use of resources by candidates is concerned.

Use of Computers: Word processors, including those which can make use of spelling check type software, may be used by candidates.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES   Centres should note the following before designing instruments of assessment.

Purpose

To an extent the purpose of the communication will be defined by the Range Statement "Type of communication". It is reasonable however to expect that the candidate will not only identify the main purpose of the text ie to convey information but will also show some awareness of the context in which this information is conveyed eg within a letter of enquiry, a short item from a newspaper etc.

Conventions

The written communication chosen for summative purposes should clearly embody the conventions appropriate to the particular form eg if a candidate is reading a short newspaper item the layout including any graphic material, the vocabulary and degree of formality are clearly typical of its type. Literary conventions would not normally be covered.

1.   Restricted Response questions of a generic or text specific nature.

       Restricted Response questions should only be set which address significant aspects of a text. It follows from this that all questions should be answered correctly if the candidate is to demonstrate coverage of the performance criteria.

2.   Assignments.

EXEMPLARS   Within the Range Statement "Type of Communication" does not specify a particular form. This has been done intentionally to ensure that the centre can exercise maximum flexibility when devising appropriate summative assessments. Nevertheless, taken together the range statements make clear which types of text would be acceptable.

Outcome 1   Purely informational texts, eg lists, catalogues, inventories may profitably feature in the course but would not yield appropriate summative evidence as they would not convey a clearly stated point of view or feeling.

              The following examples are meant to be illustrations of the types of text which would be appropriate for summative purposes.

              Newspapers   Short news items with perhaps a direct quote to convey a point of view or feeling.

              Letters   (to newspapers) Short letters which express a personal reaction to a news event or matter of local interest.

              Business   Short letters containing expressions of

	Letters	regret, apology or annoyance in relation to, for example, an unpaid bill or a service not provided.
	Ephemera	This could include hand bills, notices or leaflets which are advertising a particular event, service or articles for sale. The benefits of whatever is being advertised should however be couched in terms that constitute a clearly stated point of view.
	Fiction	The use of fiction for summative purposes is essentially problematic. The Range Statement for Outcome 1 "Type of communication" specifies "written communication which combines factual content, with a clearly stated point of view or feeling". It is comparatively easy to find short passages of fiction that meet this range statement. However, at this level it may be unrealistic to expect candidates to be aware of the literary conventions that help define the type of text and its purposes.
Outcome 2		Candidates may reasonably be expected to produce any of the types of writing which are exemplified under Outcome 1. In addition the following can also be considered.
	A diary	This can be used as a planning tool for the candidate or as a reflective record of recent events. This second use is more likely to produce statements of feeling or point of view if the intention is to meet the second class within the "Type of communication" Range Statement.
	Logbook/Record of Work	The advantage of these types of writing is that they can be assimilated easily into other vocational or training areas.
	Personal/ reflective writing	Personal or informative letters would be suitable tasks for this outcome.

PROGRESSION   Progress from this unit is to Unit No 7110035 Communication 2 .

RECOGNITION Many SQA NC units are recognised for entry/recruitment purposes. For up-to-date information see the SQA guide 'Recognised and Recommended Groupings'.

REFERENCES

1. Guide to unit writing.
2. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
3. Procedures for special needs statements are set out in SQA's guide 'Students with Special Needs'.
4. Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures.
5. For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list.