

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

CODE DM3P 12

COURSE Administration (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to equip candidates with the necessary knowledge and understanding required to carry out the role of an administrative assistant in the modern business environment. It is suitable for candidates who have prior knowledge of administrative procedures.

OUTCOMES

1. Explain strategies which can be employed to ensure effectiveness in the workplace.
2. Describe the impact of changing working practices on the modern working environment.
3. Describe the procedures and processes involved in recruiting, developing and supporting staff.
4. Explain how formal meetings are planned, conducted and supported.
5. Explain the importance of providing effective customer service.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

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

- ◆ Standard Grade Administration at Credit level
- ◆ The *Administrative Services* Unit at Intermediate 2

Administrative Information

Superclass: AY

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit at Higher (6 SCQF Credit points at SCQF level 6*).

*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 Skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

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

Explain strategies which can be employed to ensure effectiveness in the workplace.

Performance Criteria

- a) The role and qualities of an administrative assistant are described.
- b) The advantage of effective planning, organising and monitoring of work are explained.
- c) The benefits of team-working to the employee and the organisation are explained.

OUTCOME 2

Describe the impact of changing working practices on the modern working environment.

Performance Criteria

- a) The impact of different working practices on the employee and the organisations is described.
- b) The effect of the work environment on the employee is described.
- c) Legislation and methods of communicating legislation are outlined.
- d) The consequences of breaches of organisational and legislative procedures are stated.

OUTCOME 3

Describe the procedures and processes involved in recruiting, developing and supporting staff.

Performance Criteria

- a) Recruitment and selection procedures are described.
- b) Staff development processes are described.
- c) Procedures relating to staff welfare are described.

OUTCOME 4

Explain how formal meetings are planned, conducted and supported.

Performance Criteria

- a) Types of meetings are described.
- b) Responsibilities of the Chairperson and Secretary are described.
- c) Terms used in the conduct of meetings are explained.
- d) The use of documentation relating to meetings is explained.
- e) The impact of technology on the conduct and organisation of meetings is described.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

OUTCOME 5

Explain the importance of providing effective customer service.

Performance Criteria

- a) Areas covered by customer service policies are described.
- b) The benefits of effective customer service are described.
- c) Consequences of poor customer service for the organisation are explained.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The assessment for this Unit will assess all Outcomes and all Performance Criteria within Outcomes. It must be undertaken after completion of the Unit under controlled, closed book conditions.

The Evidence required will consist of responses to a series of restricted response questions.

The maximum time allocation for this assessment is one hour. The assessment may be undertaken over two sessions. Where two sessions are required, the assessment must be delivered in two parts with the second part unseen.

Where candidates fail to reach the agreed threshold score, re-assessment should follow using an alternative instrument of assessment.

The assessment instrument should sample the content and skills defined in Appendix 1. Each assessment instrument must cover all Outcomes and all Performance Criteria.

The standard to be applied is illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

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 would be suitable for anyone wishing to learn how the administrative function is carried out in a business environment at this level and would provide them with knowledge of the issues affecting their role and the business environment in which they work.

This Unit is set in the context of the modern business environment and candidates should be introduced to up-to-date administrative procedures and practices. Throughout the learning and teaching of the Units of the Course, the use of a simulated office will be more meaningful to most candidates.

Although only knowledge and understanding will be assessed, the use of practical activities, including the use of ICT, should be encouraged to underpin related knowledge.

Links with the business community would be particularly useful to candidates undertaking this Unit and centres should be encouraged to link the Units to any work experience or visits.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should be encouraged to take a positive attitude towards the quality of their own work and an integrative approach should be adopted where possible.

There are opportunities for integration of the delivery of Outcomes within this Unit. The content relating to Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in particular lends itself to an integrative approach to teaching and learning. Opportunities exist for the practical application of ICT skills within this Unit. This would be particularly helpful to those candidates studying the Course in Administration at Higher.

Realistic materials and documentation should be used throughout and a thematic approach adopted where possible. Centres may find it helpful to develop their own simulated organisation. If there are already good links with local employers, it may be possible to base some of the documentation, procedures and scenarios on real situations.

Where a simulated activity is carried out, working conditions should try to reflect those found in the workplace and include the kind of facilities, equipment and materials used in the administration environment.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The Evidence required will consist of responses to a series of restricted response questions.

The maximum time allocation for this assessment is one hour. The assessment may be undertaken over two sessions. Where two sessions are required, the assessment must be delivered in two parts with the second part unseen.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

Where candidates fail to reach the agreed threshold score, re-assessment should follow using an alternative instrument of assessment.

The assessment for this Unit will test all Outcomes. It must be undertaken after completion of the Unit under controlled, closed book conditions.

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 special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, September 2003).

National Unit Specification: appendix 1

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

The assessment for this Unit will assess all Outcomes and all Performance Criteria. Each assessment instrument should sample the content and skills defined below. Each assessment instrument must cover all Outcomes and all Performance Criteria.

Knowledge of the content covered at Intermediate 2 is assumed.

<p>1 Explain strategies which can be employed to ensure effectiveness in the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the administrative assistant:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— role/duties of the administrative assistant at a senior level — job description— qualities of the administrative assistant - person specification ◆ targets for the individual and the organization:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— personal development plan— action plan— setting own targets— setting departmental targets— dealing with changing priorities of people and tasks— monitoring and evaluating progress ◆ time and task management (self and others):<ul style="list-style-type: none">— skills required: planning, delegating, organising, directing and controlling— identification of time stealers— time management strategies— benefits to individual and organisation of good time management— consequences to individual and organisation of poor time management ◆ team working:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— features of effective teams— leadership skills and skills of team members— benefits to individuals and the organisation of effective team working
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National Unit Specification: appendix 1 (cont)

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

<p>2 Describe the impact of changing working practices on the modern working environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ working practices ◆ contracts of employment ◆ the work environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — office layout (cellular and open plan) — ergonomics — employee morale and wellbeing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ methods of communicating organisational and legal requirements ◆ consequences of breaches of organisational and legislative procedures
<p>3 Describe the procedures and processes involved in recruiting, developing and supporting staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ recruitment and selection procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — internal and external advertising — job descriptions — person specifications — applications — interviews — tests — employment checks ◆ staff development processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — staff appraisal – the appraisal and review process — continuous professional development — life-long learning — staff training — in-house and external ◆ procedures relating to staff welfare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — counselling — advice on grievance and disciplinary procedures — procedures for dealing with absence and illness — staff friendly issues

National Unit Specification: appendix 1 (cont)

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

<p>4 Explain how formal meetings are planned, conducted and supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Types of meetings and committees:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— Annual General— Extraordinary General— Board— Committee◆ responsibilities of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— Chairperson during a meeting— Secretary before, during and after a meeting (internal and external)— consequences of inadequate preparation for meetings◆ terms used in the conduct of meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— quorum, postpone, adjournment, motion, proposer, seconder, unanimous, resolution, amendment, ballot, abstain, majority, casting vote, address the chair, verbatim, point of order, standing orders◆ documentation relating to meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— notice of meeting and agenda— minutes (including action minutes)◆ the impact of technology on the conduct and organisation of meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— e-diaries— e-mail— video conferencing— audio conferencing— web cams and internet meetings— mobile phones and video phones— networks
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National Unit Specification: appendix 1 (cont)

UNIT Administrative Services (Higher)

<p>5 Explain the importance of providing effective customer service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the importance of customer service policies to the organization:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— written customer care strategy— service level agreements— complaints procedure— methods of evaluating policy: satisfaction surveys, customer focus groups, market research— quality management systems
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