National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Financial Services: Building Positive Relationships with Customers and Colleagues (Intermediate 2)

CODE DM7V 11

COURSE Financial Services (Intermediate 2)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Intermediate 2 Financial Services Course. It is suitable for those candidates who wish to pursue a career in the financial services sector but it can be taken as a stand alone Unit with the aim of developing skills and knowledge of customer care and services in a broader sense.

The Unit aims to help candidates to develop skills in handling customer queries, skills in interacting with clients and to recognise the benefits to a business of good customer relations. Candidates will be able to assess customer's needs, gather and communicate relevant product information to them. Candidates will also be introduced to, and encouraged to develop, positive behaviour techniques and an appreciation of the effect of good customer service on the business.

OUTCOMES

1 Gather and analyse information relevant to customer needs.
2 Communicate relevant product information to the customer.
3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how financial institutions establish and build relationships with existing customers and how they attract prospective customers.
4 Work with others to produce a good practice guide for customer relations.

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:

- Intermediate 1 English
- Standard Grade English at General level

Administrative Information

Superclass: BA

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit(s) at Intermediate 2 (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 in this Unit.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in *Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Unit*.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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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

Gather and analyse information relevant to customer needs.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify customer needs.
(b) Gather current information relevant to the identified needs of the customer.
(c) Analyse information gathered in relation to the identified needs of the customer.
(d) List a range of financial products appropriate to the identified needs of the customer.

OUTCOME 2

Communicate relevant product information to the customer.

Performance Criteria

(a) Present a summary of the product information accurately and clearly to the customer.
(b) Use appropriate business terminology throughout the communication.
(c) Demonstrate positive behaviour throughout the interactions.

OUTCOME 3

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how financial institutions establish and build relationships with existing customers and how they attract prospective customers.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe ways in which financial institutions attract prospective customers.
(b) Identify ways in which financial institutions build relationships with existing customers.
(c) Explain the effects of poor customer service on the business and the customer.
(d) Explain the benefits of good customer relationships on the business.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 4

Work with others to produce a good practice guide for customer relations.

Performance Criteria

(a) Agree the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the task.
(b) Agree time limits and deadlines for steps involved in the task.
(c) Monitor progress with others in order to complete the task.
(d) Interact constructively with others throughout the task.
(e) Contribute to the production of a good practice guide.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written/oral evidence, performance and product evidence is required which demonstrates that all Outcomes and Performance Criteria have been achieved.

For Outcomes 1 and 2 candidates will undertake an assignment in which they will analyse and present product information to customers. The assignment will cover:

- a minimum of four customers, at least one being a prospective customer and at least one an existing customer
- products should cover loans, mortgages, investment products and savings
- information should relate to one company
- communication modes should cover:
  - one e-mail
  - one letter
  - one telephone conversation
  - one interview role play

In at least one of the written communications, reference should be made to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Written/oral evidence will be required to demonstrate that the customer's needs have been identified and information on appropriate products has been summarised. An assessor observation checklist will be required to show that both written and oral communication with customers has been effective.

For Outcomes 3 and 4, candidates will undertake an assignment as follows:

- answer questions on two case studies on customer service
- work in groups (minimum of 2) to plan and produce a guide to good practice in customer relations within a given timescale; this may be written/graphical/presented orally
- complete a log sheet giving details of the group experience

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Written/oral evidence is required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding for Outcome 3 and an assessor checklist and product evidence is required for Outcome 4.

The National Assessment Bank item (NAB) for this Unit provides details of the product information assignment, an assessor observation checklist, two case studies, an assessor checklist and log sheet for the group exercise. The NAB exemplifies the national standard. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the NAB to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Financial Services: Building Positive Relationships with Customers and Colleagues (Intermediate 2)

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 should be set in the context of a financial service organisation. Teaching and learning should ideally take place in a supervised workplace setting or simulated workplace setting.

The main content of the Unit is focused on developing an understanding of all aspects of building good customer relations and also on developing practical skills in interacting positively with customers and colleagues. Relationships with both existing and new customers are included. The content throughout should reflect as many current, relevant and realistically varied experiences as would be normally dealt with in an organisational environment. It is important that the learning process is reflective of current workplace practice and product availability, in what is an ever changing market.

Knowledge and understanding of current products will be developed through undertaking practical assignments in relation to customer needs. Understanding of appropriate oral, non-verbal and written communication skills will be developed in the context of practical communication tasks using different modes of communication. The need to work co-operatively with colleagues will be explored through a practical group assignment.

Knowledge and understanding will extend to an appreciation of the effects of consumer protection. Candidates should be encouraged to use material available to them from the workplace, the internet, books and periodicals in order to increase their awareness of the implications of this legislation.

There is ample opportunity throughout the Unit, via practical activity, to develop and discuss general employability skills and attitudes such as positive attitude, time keeping, attendance, appropriate dress, co-operation, tolerance of others, working as part of a team and positive attitude to learning.

Where this Unit is taken as part of the Intermediate 2 Financial Services Course, the practical activities involving communication with customers and working on group tasks provide good opportunities for recording reflective learning in the Employability Skills for Financial Services Unit.

Candidates should take account of good working practice demonstrated by the industry.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Experiential learning is the main approach recommended for this Unit. This involves learning through practical experiences and activities. Candidates should experience workplace conditions where possible and should be encouraged to perform tasks and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the workplace. Workplace visits and visiting speakers may also be useful learning experiences.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Financial Services: Building Positive Relationships with Customers and Colleagues (Intermediate 2)

Experiential learning also involves reflecting on experiences/activities, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. It is important to encourage candidates throughout the Unit to evaluate their own work and progress.

In this Unit there are many opportunities to build up an understanding of the workplace ethos and the behaviours and practice required of employees. The intention of the Unit is to provide candidates with an introduction to the importance of developing positive and effective relationships within the workplace. Such relationships will be formed with both familiar clients and new customers as well as with colleagues. Role play activities, case study material in either video or written form will be useful learning experiences.

Candidates should be encouraged to carry out their own research into many of the practical aspects of the Unit — the gathering of information, analysing customer needs, identifying products currently available on the financial circuit. Much of this information can be gained from class discussion, promotional literature, newspaper and TV advertisements and personal experience. It is important that the learning process is reflective of current workplace practice and product availability, in what is an ever changing market.

In this Unit candidates will take part in role play telephone and face-to-face interviews with customers. They will also compose letters and e-mails communicating information to customers. These are good opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill Communication. Candidates will also plan and undertake a group task. This is an opportunity to develop aspects of Working with Others.

Core Skills

The practical nature of activities undertaken in this Unit will enable candidates to develop Core Skills in verbal and written communication, team working and problem solving. Candidates will be required to work in a team on a practical activity taking responsibility for both personal actions and team decisions. Candidates are required to offer advice on products and services to potential customers thus developing communication and problem solving skills in the setting of the financial services industry.

The opportunity should be taken throughout delivery of this Unit, to emphasise that the relevant Core Skills indicated above, and the employability skills developed, are life skills which can be applied in a wide range of situations in everyday life and in employment.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The assignment for Outcomes 1 and 2 should be based on available and current market products. The evidence generated should relate to one company and a minimum of four customers. There are various combinations of factors which can be incorporated — for example: first time house buyers, retirees, established clients, new customers, students. The assessment should be based on the gathering of the relevant information and the communicating of that to the customers, and not on giving correct advice at this stage. However, the recommended products should stay within the bounds of reason, for example, a bank overdraft would be inappropriate to a low paid employee wishing to purchase a new car.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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In Outcome 4 the emphasis is on a practical task conducted along with at least one other person. The process is the most important aspect of this exercise — the quality of the product itself is not assessed. Each group will decide the format of their finished product and each candidate must contribute to the final product as part of the process.

Where this Unit is taken as part of the Intermediate 2 Financial Services Course, the log sheet for the group activity could be used for the Employability Skills Unit.

Where candidates have direct experience of the workplace or have been on a work placement or visit, they should be encouraged to reflect that experience in their task for Outcome 4.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* **(www.sqa.org.uk)**.