National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Developing Skills for Employment (SCQF level 5)

CODE   F393 11

SUMMARY

This is an introductory Unit which enables candidates to develop skills for employment relevant to business. Candidates will identify and evaluate their current skills and attitudes relating to employability and develop the skills and knowledge required to prepare a curriculum vitae. They will also develop the basic skills needed to prepare for and participate in a job interview. As a result, candidates who complete the Unit will have been able to develop skills and techniques which will enable them to prepare for employment but also enhance their prospects of gaining employment. The Unit is suitable for candidates who have not had any previous employment experience.

OUTCOMES

1   Review current skills and attitudes relevant to working in a business environment.
2   Produce a curriculum vitae for a specific job role in a business setting.
3   Participate in an interview for the specified job role.
4   Evaluate own skills and attitudes relevant to working in the business environment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit 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.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CORE SKILLS

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

This 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

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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 SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Review current skills and attitudes relevant to working in a business environment.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify own strengths and areas for improvement in relation to specified skills and attitudes.
(b) Set relevant personal goals in relation to the development of these skills and attitudes.

OUTCOME 2

Produce a curriculum vitae for a specific job role in a business setting.

Performance Criteria

(a) List all own existing qualifications in the curriculum vitae.
(b) Identify own skills, attitudes and experience relevant to the job role.
(c) Explain why these skills, attitudes and experience are relevant to the job role.

OUTCOME 3

Participate in an interview for the specified job role.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify potential questions that could be asked by the interviewer.
(b) Communicate appropriately during the interview, using effective verbal and non-verbal communication.
(c) Respond appropriately to questions asked at the interview.

OUTCOME 4

Evaluate own skills and attitudes relevant to working in the business environment.

Performance Criteria

(a) Gather feedback from the interviewer on specified skills.
(b) Evaluate progress in achieving personal goals for the development of specified skills and attitudes
(c) Identify action points in relation to the development of these skills and attitudes.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Performance evidence and written and/or recorded oral evidence which covers all Outcomes and Performance Criteria is required for this Unit.

Outcome 1: Current skills and attitudes

This will include the following:

1   a record of the candidate's review of their own strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the following skills and attitudes:

- positive attitude to others
- verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- listening skills
- good time keeping
- ability to plan and prepare
- ability to work with others
- understanding roles and responsibilities in a business environment

2   a record of personal goals set in relation to the development of these skills and attitudes. The evidence should cover a minimum of **three** personal goals.

Outcome 2: Curriculum Vitae

Candidates will produce a completed Curriculum Vitae relating to a specific job role in a business setting relevant to the candidate's employment aspirations. Candidates will be given an appropriate curriculum vitae template which they will complete on their own at an appropriate point in the Unit. The template will include sections in which candidates can:

- identify those skills, qualities and experience which they have that are relevant to the specific job role; and
- explain why these skills, qualities and experience are relevant to the specific job role.

Outcome 3: Interview

Evidence of the candidate's performance during the interview which must include the following:

- written and/or oral evidence of a list of potential questions that could be asked by the interviewer which the candidate has identified.
- an observation checklist, completed by the teacher/lecturer, recording the candidate's performance during the interview which covers: appropriate and effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills; responding appropriately to questions asked by the interviewer.

The interview will take place at an appropriate point during the Unit, last no more than ten minutes and there will be **one** interviewer who will be a teacher/lecturer.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Developing Skills for Employment (SCQF level 5)

Outcome 4: Candidate evaluation

Written and/or oral evidence for this Outcome will be generated after the interview. It will include the following:

♦ a record of feedback gathered from the interviewer in relation to relevant skills and attitudes.
♦ an evaluation of progress made in relation to the candidate's personal goals for the development of these skills and attitudes.
♦ a record of action points for the development of these skills and attitudes based on the evaluation of progress. The evidence should cover a minimum of two action points.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment materials and illustrates the standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage required. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Developing Skills for Employment (SCQF level 5)

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 an optional Unit in the National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

It is an introductory Unit and candidates would normally be expected to be at an early stage in the development of skills and attitudes for employment. The underlying aim of this Unit is to enable candidates to enhance their employability by providing them with the opportunity to develop relevant skills and attitudes which will increase their chances of obtaining employment in business.

Candidates would benefit from studying this Unit at a relatively early stage in their National Certificate programme. This will allow candidates to focus on the planning and achievement of personal goals. It will also help to raise awareness of the various skills employers require in a business environment, allowing candidates to focus on areas for development during the remainder of their studies.

Candidates begin by identifying their current skills and attitudes relating to working in a business environment. On the basis of these, they set personal goals for the development of these skills and attitudes. They then prepare a curriculum vitae related to a specific job role in a business setting, after which they participate in a simulated job interview for this specific job role. They are given feedback by the interviewer and are expected to make use of this feedback to evaluate their personal goals. They complete the Unit by using this evaluation to set action points for the development of their skills and attitudes. On completion of the Unit candidates should be able to demonstrate relevant skills and attitudes for obtaining employment in business and have a raised awareness of what employers are looking for. The Unit will help the candidate to understand their own situation in terms of skills and attitudes to employment and give them an appreciation of development needs and goal setting.

The Unit is suitable for candidates who have not had any previous employment experience. It is also appropriate for candidates who have some employment experience but are at a stage in their personal development where they will benefit from reviewing and practising relevant skills. This is particularly so when candidates are hoping to take up employment openings which are different from their previous work experience.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Developing Skills for Employment (SCQF level 5)

Outcome 1

This enables candidates to take stock of their current situation in terms of skills and attitudes relevant for employment in a business environment. The Unit focuses on specific skills and attitudes. They are:

♦ positive attitude to others
♦ verbal and non-verbal communication skills
♦ listening skills
♦ good time keeping
♦ ability to plan and prepare
♦ ability to work with others
♦ understanding roles and responsibilities in a business environment

Candidates should be made aware of what each of the above involves in terms of employment. This should help raise awareness of their current situation. They can compare each one with their current skill levels. As a result, they can describe their strengths and weaknesses in terms of these specified skills and attitudes. Candidates should be encouraged to be positive and enthusiastic about the skills and attitudes which they possess. They should also, however, be encouraged to take a realistic view about how employers may perceive their current skills and attitudes. This could be done, for example, by asking candidates to consider carefully the evidence that they have to support their judgement of whether a particular skill or attitude is a strength or weakness.

On the basis of their description of their strengths and weaknesses, candidates should set some personal goals for the development of their skills and attitudes towards employment. Personal goals could cover addressing weaknesses as well as further developing strengths, depending on the candidate's current situation and future intentions.

Candidates should identify at least three suitable goals, although they may set more if this is appropriate. The timescale for development is not fixed and candidates should choose one which is appropriate to their own situation. It is possible, that, in some cases, the development period may be quite short (eg until the end of the National Certificate in Business programme). As above, it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved in terms of development in the chosen time scale.

Outcome 2

The next element involves the production of a curriculum vitae. In order to enter employment candidates will be required to complete an application form or Curriculum Vitae and will probably have to attend an interview. In fact, candidates who wish to progress into further/higher education will have to go through a similar process. Outcomes 2 and 3 have been designed to help prepare candidates for this process.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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For Outcome 2, candidates are expected to prepare a curriculum vitae with a specific job role relevant to business in mind. Candidates may use actual job roles (eg taken from newspapers or recruitment websites for example) or they may be given a hypothetical job role (based perhaps on an actual situation). The approach adopted is likely to depend on the candidates involved and their intentions for future employment. Whatever, it is likely to help candidates (and make for a more effective interview) if a job and person specification for the specific job role are available.

When preparing the curriculum vitae candidates should be made aware of discrimination legislation and refrain from including their date of birth and gender - forename initial only should be used. The curriculum vitae could then be prepared with the specific job role in mind and must include the following areas:

♦ Personal statement
♦ Personal details — name, address, contact details
♦ Education/qualifications
♦ Achievements
♦ Employment history/experience
♦ Skills and attitudes relevant to the job role — this should include a brief explanation of why these are relevant to the job role (candidates who have work experience could combine this section with the previous one on employment history/experience)
♦ Referees

Candidates should be given a template for their curriculum vitae. However, they should also be encouraged to carefully consider the presentation of the curriculum vitae. Areas to be looked at can include:

♦ easy to read
♦ follows a logical order
♦ dates in reverse chronological order for employment and education

Candidates may benefit from advice on how to present themselves in a positive manner in the curriculum vitae. Candidates may not recognise, for example, that they do have achievements which can be included in their CV. Candidates who have no work experience can be given guidance on highlighting the relevance of other experiences such as babysitting or involvement in student activities. Guidance on how to recognise less obvious personal skills and attitudes which might be relevant will also be useful.

Candidates are also likely to benefit from guidance on how to match up their existing skills and attitudes with the requirements of the specific job role as set out in the person specification for the job role.

Outcome 3

The interview should be conducted by one teacher/lecturer and should last about 10 minutes. Candidates should be interviewed individually. The interview is a simulated event but efforts should be made to make it as realistic as possible. Candidates should be given a specific date, time and place for the interview.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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They can also be asked to provide their curriculum vitae to the teacher/lecturer by a specified time. This will enable the teacher/lecturer to plan an appropriate interview. Candidates should prepare for the interview by identifying potential questions which the interviewer could ask them. A record of these should be kept.

At the interview, the use of video is an option but this is not essential for this Unit. The teacher/lecturer should complete an observation checklist which should be retained as evidence of performance for each candidate.

Candidates are required to communicate appropriately during the interview, using effective verbal and non-verbal communication. This requires that candidates should:

♦   speak clearly and audibly
♦   provide accurate information based on her/his curriculum vitae
♦   maintain eye contact where appropriate
♦   use appropriate tone, pace and body language

Candidates are also required to respond appropriately to questions asked at the interview. This requires that candidates should:

♦   demonstrate effective listening by making appropriate responses to the interviewer
♦   respond to questions in a coherent and logical manner

Candidates will need guidance on how to behave appropriately in an employment interview. This will include the importance of presenting a positive image of themselves.

Outcome 4

This Outcome returns to the personal goals which were set by candidates as part of Outcome 1. The structure of the Outcomes is, therefore, designed to help candidates recognise the importance of the feedback loop. In this, targets are set, action is taken and feedback is obtained on this performance of the actions. As a result, the targets can be modified in the light of the feedback. This Outcome also helps candidates develop the skill of reflecting on their own abilities.

After the interview, candidates should gather feedback from the interviewer. It may be given immediately the interview has finished. However, it may be more effective if candidates are allowed a little time to reflect on what took place. Whatever, feedback should be given soon after the interview.

Candidates should use the feedback to review the extent to which they have made progress on achieving their personal goals relating to the development of the specified skills and attitudes. Candidates are likely to benefit from guidance on how to do this. They are also likely to need help in identifying action points for future development. Candidates should identify **two** action points but, depending on individuals, more than two may be made.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The Unit has been designed to allow the candidates the practical experience of planning and preparing for employment. Following the introduction of the various concepts in the Unit, it would be beneficial for candidates to be supported through the process of developing and producing the necessary evidence. A workshop approach with support available from the teacher/lecturer would be an appropriate learning environment. Access to the Internet would be beneficial and would allow the candidates the opportunity of researching recruitment and personal development websites.

Throughout the delivery of the Unit, candidates can be encouraged to take a positive attitude to themselves and to the development of the skills and attitudes that they currently have. The Unit can be an important step in building confidence among candidates.

The structure of the Unit requires that, in Outcome 4, candidates evaluate personal goals set in Outcome 1. In order to help candidates develop their ability to evaluate their skills and attitudes they could be encouraged to use a personal development diary. The personal development diary would not be assessed, but it could include examples of experiences where they have practised skills or learned something about themselves. This information would be useful tool when candidates come to evaluate their personal goals and identify action points for the future. The diary could also contribute to helping candidates build their self-confidence.

The content of this Unit should be delivered in the order indicated by the Outcomes. However, it may be advisable to concentrate on Outcomes 2 and 3 at the same time as the curriculum vitae will require to be tailored to the job role the candidate has selected.

Outcome 1

It will be important for candidates to be given teacher/lecturer input on the skills and attitudes they will be reviewing and evaluating. They are also likely to need guidance on how to decide on strengths and weaknesses. When candidates are setting personal goals, they may find it useful to use the SMART plan model, which includes **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime limited goals.

As candidates will be required to set personal goals and evaluate their progress in achieving these goals, it will be important to keep reminding them of these skills and attitudes throughout the delivery of the Unit. They could be given opportunities to practise and develop the skills through role plays, group, paired or individual exercises.

Outcomes 2 and 3

Candidates will also need an input on how to produce a curriculum vitae and how to identify suitable information to include. They may also benefit from guidance on using the Internet to identify suitable job roles in business and on how to tailor their CV to a specific job role.

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Identifying a suitable job role in business is likely be a good starting point for these two Outcomes, since both depend on this. However, it may also reinforce the employability skills and attitudes covered in Outcome 1. Candidates can be encouraged from the outset to link the job roles they identify with relevant employability skills and attitudes. This can help candidates to recognise job roles which are appropriate but also highlight ways in which they can develop their existing skills and attitudes to enhance the job opportunities available. In this way they can begin the process of identifying action points which form part of Outcome 4.

While practising for the interview scenario candidates should be encouraged to evaluate themselves and their peers as this can add value to the learning process. Role-play exercises can be carried out in small groups. By providing candidates with a list of suitable questions they can interview each other. There are many video programmes available on the subject of interviewing and the teacher/lecturer may wish to use them to support learning and teaching. The Unit may also benefit from involving human resource personnel from various organisations.

Outcome 4

The learning and teaching approaches suggested above should build naturally towards Outcome 4. Candidates should, therefore, see it as something to which they have been working towards. However, they should recognise that it is not an end point in itself but is also the start of another developmental cycle.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

This Unit can provide candidates with opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills of Communication and Problem Solving.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

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 communications 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)*.

Evidence for this Unit could be assembled in a portfolio.

It would be appropriate for Outcome 1 to be assessed at the beginning of the Unit before candidates embark on the remaining Outcomes. Candidates could provide evidence in a written or oral format. Where candidates produce evidence in an oral format, an assessor checklist must be kept. Candidates must provide evidence of three personal goals. Candidates may identify a larger number of personal goals if this is appropriate.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Developing Skills for Employment (SCQF level 5)

The assessment of Outcome 2 may usefully be combined with Outcome 3 to allow the curriculum vitae to be tailored to the specified job role. Candidates would be required to produce an accurate curriculum vitae that clearly covers the areas identified in the Evidence Requirements. They should use a suitable template to do this.

The teacher/lecturer should complete an observation checklist for the interview which will be the evidence for Outcome 3. The candidate must also provide the teacher/lecturer with appropriate evidence of the job selected and a person specification or equivalent prior to the interview taking place. This could be included in the portfolio although it is not specifically required for satisfactory completion of the Unit.

Evidence for Outcome 4 could also be provided in a written or oral format. Where candidates produce evidence in an oral format, an assessor checklist must be kept. Candidates must provide evidence of two action points. It is acceptable to provide more than this if it is appropriate.

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**).