National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

CODE   F57F 10

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to help candidates in gaining, preparing for and sustaining purposeful employment. Candidates will be given a variety of opportunities to examine their own personal skills and reflect on these within the context of current job markets.

Candidates will develop employability skills and personal attributes in relation to gaining and sustaining employment including job selection methods, employee and employer expectations, appropriate workplace behaviours and attitudes, rights and responsibilities and personal finance. This Unit will emphasise the importance of gaining and sustaining employment and assist candidates to develop the confidence and self esteem to actively seek employment and/or further learning.

This Unit would be appropriate for young people in schools, or adults returning to work, who will be seeking employment and wish to develop their employability skills and knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the workplace.

OUTCOMES

1   Identify and describe own employability skills and personal attributes required for employment.
2   Investigate employment opportunities and complete a job application for a specified employment opportunity.
3   Identify and evaluate employability skills and personal attributes in relation to job selection methods and performance in an interview.
4   Demonstrate an understanding of the employability skills and personal attributes required to successfully maintain employment.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 4 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4).

*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

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

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

Identify and describe own employability skills and personal attributes required for employment.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify skills and personal attributes commonly required by employers.
(b) Identify and describe own skills and personal attributes in relation to those commonly required by employers.
(c) Identify ways of improving own skills and personal attributes to improve employment prospects.

OUTCOME 2

Investigate employment opportunities and complete a job application for a specified employment opportunity.

Performance Criteria

(a) Gather information from a range of sources relating to employment opportunities.
(b) Identify a job advertisement appropriate to own skills and personal attributes.
(c) Complete an accurate application for the selected employment opportunity.

OUTCOME 3

Identify and evaluate employability skills and personal attributes in relation to job selection methods and performance in an interview.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify the most commonly used job selection methods.
(b) Identify appropriate skills and personal attributes for specified selection processes.
(c) Evaluate own skills and personal attributes in relation to specified selection processes.
(d) Identify own development needs in relation to performance in an interview.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

OUTCOME 4

Demonstrate an understanding of the employability skills and personal attributes required to successfully maintain employment.

Performance Criteria

(a) Explain appropriate work behaviours, attitudes and expectations in relation to both employer and employee.
(b) Identify the potential consequences of inappropriate behaviour at work.
(c) Explain the importance of managing wages to sustaining employment.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria of the Unit.

A holistic approach is recommended for assessment of this Unit and evidence must be generated through open-book conditions.

Candidates are required to produce a folio of evidence. Where evidence is oral in nature this must be supported by an appropriate assessor checklist.

♦ written and/or recorded oral evidence is required which demonstrates an understanding of aspects of employability skills and personal attributes required for employment and an evaluation of the candidate's development needs in relation to these
♦ performance evidence generated by participation in practical activities for this assessment should be carried out under supervision

Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral evidence

Candidates will investigate the skills and personal attributes commonly required by employers and provide a minimum of **five** skills and/or personal attributes commonly required by employers from the following:

♦ positive attitude to workplace and learning
♦ good time-keeping and attendance
♦ appropriate appearance
♦ working co-operatively with others
♦ ability to work in a team
♦ understanding roles and responsibilities in the workplace
♦ self-respect and consideration for others
♦ planning and preparing for work
♦ flexibility and adaptability
♦ following instructions
♦ efficient use of time

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

♦   confidence to seek feedback
♦   health and safety awareness
♦   literacy
♦   numeracy

Candidates will then consider how their own skills and personal attributes compare with these and then identify their own development needs in relation to the personal attributes and/or skills identified.

Outcome 2 — Written and/or oral evidence

Candidates will investigate **three** sources of information relating to employment opportunities. Further guidance on sources of employment opportunities can be found in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

One employment opportunity appropriate to the candidate's own skills and personal attributes should be selected. An application should be completed against the criteria of the employment opportunity containing a personal statement consisting of accurate and truthful information. Information should be presented in a recognisable format and to a standard appropriate to the criteria specified in the employment opportunity. Further guidance on appropriate forms of application can be found in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

Outcome 3 — Written and/or oral evidence

Candidates should identify **two** different selection methods, one of which must be a one to one interview conducted in person. Candidates should provide a basic evaluation of the skills and personal attributes required to participate successfully in the specified selection processes and identify their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to these.

Candidates should participate in a one to one interview, in person, and then evaluate their performance. Assessment of the Outcome does not relate to performance in the interview but in the candidate's ability to evaluate their performance. Candidates will have to identify their strengths and weaknesses and how these might affect their success in gaining employment. Candidates should identify areas for improvement. Further guidance on areas for improvement or development can be found in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

The second job selection method may be one of the following:

♦   group interview
♦   panel interview
♦   telephone interview
♦   presentation
♦   psychometric test
♦   aptitude test
♦   assessment centre

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 4 — Written and/or oral evidence

Candidates will identify appropriate behaviour and attitudes at work, consisting of **one** basic aspect of health and safety, in relation to employee and employer, and **one** basic aspect of employment legislation in relation to employee and employer. Further guidance on appropriate areas of employment legislation are given in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

Candidates will identify **two** behaviours or attitudes that are appropriate, and **two** behaviours or attitudes that are inappropriate for an employee in the workplace. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and attitudes can be found in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

Candidates should identify at least **one** potential consequence of inappropriate behaviour on **each** of the following:

♦   employee
♦   employer
♦   colleagues
♦   customers

Candidates should provide a basic explanation on the need to hold a bank account for their salary to be paid into, and the need to manage their wages in a way that covers their travel, lunch and other working expenses.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) provided for this Unit illustrates the standard that should be applied. 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   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

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 within the National Progression Award in Enterprise and Employability at SCQF level 4. This Unit is designed to develop employability skills and understanding and to help candidates identify their own skills and areas for development as they progress towards purposeful employment. It is suitable for a variety of learning environments including school, college and the workplace.

Candidates will be given the opportunity to examine employer and employee expectations and will also be required to understand that once employment is achieved, employees are still required to meet the daily expectations of the employer.

Evidence for all Outcomes can be presented in a variety of ways including:

♦ oral
♦ pictorial
♦ written
♦ IT presentation
♦ notes/mind maps/tutor notes
♦ film/voice recordings

Outcome 1

Candidates could examine current generic employability skills. They should access these from a variety of sources including current careers publications, internet, discussion with teachers/lecturers and discussion with employers where possible.

Candidates should be supported in defining employability skills and personal attributes and in identifying employment opportunities. Candidates should also be encouraged to actively seek ways to improve on skills they have identified as development needs.

Outcome 2

Candidates should identify a variety of employment opportunities from a range of sources and select appropriate employment opportunities for application identifying where their own knowledge and skills are relevant. Possible sources of information on employment opportunities may be:

♦ job centres
♦ careers advisors
♦ press (newspapers/magazines)
♦ internet
♦ recruitment agencies

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

- ♦ TV/radio
- ♦ careers fairs
- ♦ notice boards
- ♦ advertisements on employers premises
- ♦ cold calling

Through discussion and/or research candidates could examine a variety of acceptable forms of application.

- ♦ application form
- ♦ CV
- ♦ covering letter
- ♦ telephone conversation/interview
- ♦ personal statement

Candidates should complete an application containing truthful and relevant information which effectively represents their skills, personal attributes, experience and achievements.

Outcome 3

Where possible candidates should be given the opportunity to speak to employers experienced in interviewing and short listing job applications. Although achievement of the Unit is not dependent on performance in the one to one interview, it will assist candidates if they identify likely interview questions and discuss relevant and appropriate answers with the teacher/lecturer ahead of the interview. This could be undertaken as a group or class activity. Candidates should consider the importance of interview technique including - appropriate dress, body language, personal hygiene, effective verbal delivery, self confidence, preparation and arriving on time. This could also be discussed as part of a group or class activity. Candidates should then evaluate their performance during the selection process and identify their own development needs.

Areas identified for improvement and/or development may include:

- ♦ preparation
- ♦ arriving on time
- ♦ appropriate presentation and appearance
- ♦ effective verbal communication
- ♦ effective non-verbal communication
- ♦ responding appropriately and fully to questions asked in the interview
- ♦ asking relevant questions at appropriate points in the interview

To meet the resource requirements for candidates to participate in one to one interviews, centres may utilise assistance from other staff within the centre or external organisations such as local employers or public agencies, possibly through partnership arrangements.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 4

Candidates should discuss and develop an understanding of what constitutes successful employment and employee and employer expectations. They should look at attitudes, behaviours, personal presentation, 'self' skills, language and wider social issues such as stereotyping, sexist, racist and sectarian language. Candidates must be able to discuss how these have direct positive or negative effects on colleagues and customers.

Candidates should spend some time researching basic employee rights and responsibilities. Relevant information should be available from job centres, careers services, libraries, online and other relevant sources. They should demonstrate some awareness of basic information on employment and health and safety legislation. Appropriate areas of employment legislation may be:

♦ minimum wage
♦ working hours
♦ working conditions
♦ tax
♦ national insurance
♦ holiday entitlement
♦ sickness absence entitlement
♦ disciplinary procedures

Examples of appropriate behaviour for an employee in the workplace may include:

♦ positive attitude to workplace and learning
♦ good time-keeping and attendance
♦ appropriate appearance
♦ working co-operatively with others
♦ ability to work in a team
♦ understanding roles and responsibilities in the workplace
♦ self-respect and consideration for others
♦ positive and helpful attitude in dealing with customers

Examples of inappropriate behaviour for an employee in the workplace may include:

♦ poor time-keeping and attendance
♦ inappropriate use of language
♦ discriminatory behaviour
♦ negative attitude to workplace and learning
♦ lack of co-operation
♦ lack of consideration for others
♦ lack of care in appearance
♦ poor attitude to team work
♦ negative attitude and manner in dealing with customers

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT   Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

Candidates should also demonstrate some awareness of managing personal finance in relation to wages. Aspects of this can include looking at basic banking and internet banking. Candidates can gather information from local sources including branches of banks and building societies.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit is designed to develop employability skills and as such should be delivered holistically and reflectively taking into account the needs of candidates who may lack self confidence or require encouragement to develop their potential. One aim of the Unit is to help candidates improve their self confidence therefore it should be delivered within a supportive environment.

In introducing the Unit it is important that all students and teachers/assessors identify what they perceive to be they key aspects of an employable person. This information can be achieved through research and discussion across all of the Outcomes. There are a wide range of employment opportunities available, however candidates should be able to identify the key employability skills and attitudes necessary for employment across a range of job roles.

As personal appearance, skills and attitudes are being discussed it is crucial that the teacher/lecturers encourage the class to set basic boundaries and rules for mutual support. The Unit is designed to facilitate the use of practical tasks for delivery. Classes should be discursive and teaching and learning should focus on candidates needs within the context of the Unit.

Activities should be set to encourage and develop employability skills, for example, group discussions, presentations and research can help develop problem solving and decision making skills. Candidates should be encouraged to develop a creative and innovative approach to the Unit and the compilation of evidence.

Visits to job centres/career advice centres/employers and visiting speakers can all make a valuable contribution to the delivery of the Unit. These should be exploited where possible to ensure a tangible or 'real' element to the course.

Teachers/lecturers should support candidates in developing a ways to evidence research, reflection and discussion.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Through investigation of different employment opportunities, career options, preparing and participating in interview situations and self review and evaluation; within this Unit there are good opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills in:

♦ Communication
♦ Problem Solving
♦ Information and Communication Technology

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Preparing to Work (SCQF level 4)

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).*

A holistic approach is recommended for assessment of all Outcomes of this Unit. Assessment is likely to be conducted on an ongoing basis and could include activity exercises completed by the candidate as part of his/her course of study, eg a question and answer session (written or oral recording) could be combined with assessment of candidate's folio of evidence. A project/assignment approach would also be appropriate for this Unit.

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**).

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Statement added	07/05/2010