



## National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Communication (NC)

**Unit code:** FA1W 12

**Superclass:** KB

**Publication date:** December 2010

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

## Summary

This Unit is designed to provide the candidate with skills in understanding, analysing, evaluating and using complex, formal English in a range of written and spoken forms. It may be delivered as a free-standing Unit, developing communication skills for a wide range of vocational contexts. It will be particularly appropriate for candidates who need to interpret, analyse and convey complex written and oral information and may be combined with the Unit FA58 12 *Literature 1* as a Course of study.

## Outcomes

- 1 Analyse and evaluate complex written communication.
- 2 Produce complex written communication.
- 3 Analyse and evaluate complex spoken communication.
- 4 Deliver and participate in complex spoken communication.

## 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:

EE3T 11 *Communication* NC (SCQF level 5)

F3GB 11 *Communication* (SCQF level 5)

Component Units of C270 11 *English* (SCQF level 5)

## General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication

### Credit points and level

2 National Unit credits at SCQF level 6: (12 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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill                      Communication

Core Skill component                      Critical Thinking

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

### Context for Delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Communication

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**

Analyse and evaluate complex written communication.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Summarise significant information, ideas and supporting detail.
- (b) Analyse the effect of structure, style and language.
- (c) Evaluate effectiveness taking account of the writer's stance, purpose and intended readership.

### **Outcome 2**

Produce complex written communication.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Present complex information and supporting detail accurately and effectively.
- (b) Use a structure which assists clarity and impact.
- (c) Use conventions appropriate to purpose and readership.
- (d) Use style and tone consistent with purpose and readership.
- (e) Use consistently accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax.

### **Outcome 3**

Analyse and evaluate complex spoken communication.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Summarise significant information, ideas and supporting detail.
- (b) Analyse in detail the contribution of verbal and non-verbal techniques to meaning and effect.
- (c) Evaluate effectiveness taking account of the speaker's (or speakers') stance, purpose and intended audience.

## National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication

### Outcome 4

Deliver and participate in complex spoken communication.

#### Performance Criteria

- (a) Present complex information and supporting detail accurately
- (b) Use structure and delivery which makes clear links between different ideas presented
- (c) Use register, style and tone at an appropriate level of formality for purpose and audience
- (d) Make effective use of non-verbal communication
- (e) Respond to others in ways which promote and develop communication

#### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required which demonstrates that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Evidence will be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points in the Unit using a system where arrangements have been made to assure authenticity.

#### Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral evidence

Candidates are required to show that they can respond to questions by analysing and evaluating **two** types of complex written communication. The texts should be non-fiction.

#### Outcome 2 — Written and/or oral evidence

Candidates are required to produce evidence in the form of **two** complex non-fiction written texts in different formats, ie:

- ◆ Writing which mainly presents, analyses and evaluates a substantial body of information.
- ◆ Writing which develops an in depth argument or point of view.

Each text should be a minimum of 650 words.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Communication

### **Outcome 3 — Written and/or oral evidence**

Candidates are required to show that they can:

Respond to questions analysing and evaluating **two** types of complex spoken communication:

- ◆ An individual presentation.
- ◆ An in-depth group discussion.

The length of communication should be appropriate to the purpose.

### **Outcome 4 — Oral evidence**

Candidates are required to produce evidence in the form of **two** different types of complex oral communication:

- ◆ An individual presentation which should last a minimum of five minutes and be followed by questions.
- ◆ A significant contribution to an in-depth group discussion.

Brief planning notes should accompany the evidence, which could take the form of a detailed observation checklist and/or recording.

## National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Communication

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 80 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit can be taken as a free-standing Unit and also as a mandatory Unit within certain National Certificate Group Awards.

The Unit offers candidates opportunities to develop skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking at a level of complexity appropriate for Higher level.

Where this Unit is used within an award, integration of assessment tasks within the course may provide a context for the development of communication skills. Integration of assessment tasks with those, for example, of FA58 12 *Literature 1* could enhance the development of written and oral communication skills.

#### Outcome 1

##### Content of text

- ◆ Structure: Texts used will provide a structure in which the writer amplifies, modifies, exemplifies and draws conclusions.
- ◆ Language: Complex language will be used.
- ◆ Linking: Written cues will be evident that make clear the relationship between different aspects of content.
- ◆ Purpose: Texts may have more than one purpose. These may include: providing information, persuasion, expressing feelings and reactions, sharing an experience, entertaining or evaluating.

##### Choice of text

- ◆ Texts selected should be relevant to the vocational and/or personal needs of the candidates.
- ◆ Reports, articles from newspapers, websites or journals, extracts from textbooks, proposals or specifications may be appropriate.
- ◆ Different types of writing might be used, possibly to illustrate those to be produced in Outcome 2.
- ◆ National Assessment Bank assessment texts for English (Higher) may be useful, providing candidates are supervised and questions are devised to ensure that Unit Evidence Requirements are met.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Communication

**Candidates should:**

- ◆ Identify the stance of the writer.
- ◆ Evaluate the balance and effectiveness of the content.
- ◆ Make detailed reference to use of language, structure and other aspects of style, including format, layout and any use of graphic material.

**Assessment conditions**

- ◆ No time restrictions are necessary beyond those imposed for practical reasons.
- ◆ Oral evidence should be scribed or recorded.
- ◆ A centre master file to include a marking guide and marked samples of candidate responses for each assessment would be good practice.

**Outcome 2**

**The candidate should use:**

- ◆ Appropriate format and layout suitable to purpose.
- ◆ A structure which makes clear distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusions.
- ◆ Language effectively in a way that is appropriate to purpose, content and context adapted to meet the needs of the intended readership.
- ◆ Accurate spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.
- ◆ Supporting images where appropriate.

**Examples**

- ◆ The types of writing produced should cover formats useful to candidates in their present and future work or study. Reporting on the results of a practical investigation, using a recognised format, will allow the application of knowledge gained in a specialised context, informed by a consistent sense of purpose and readership. A planning record, investigation diary, lists of investigating activities and sources could be included.
- ◆ A paper or business report may include a summary followed by a clearly defined proposal.
- ◆ A critical essay could explore in depth one or more points of view or arguments.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Communication

### **Outcome 3**

#### **Text**

The text analysed should provide examples of speakers who:

- ◆ Offer evidence in support of an argument.
- ◆ Make statements which clearly synthesise and build on points previously expressed.

Candidates should identify the aim and stance of the speaker(s), evaluate the balance and effectiveness of the content in relation to audience and purpose making detailed reference to use of language, structure and other aspects of style, including non-verbal techniques.

#### **Examples**

- ◆ Suitable presentations could be formal lectures, or a talk from a live or recorded speaker.
- ◆ Suitable discussions could be a live vocational discussion, or a recorded studio exploration of a complex issue, or an interview between two or more people.

#### **Assessment conditions**

If live texts are used strategies for supporting internal and external quality procedures, such as transcripts, recordings or team marking, will be required. Evidence may be presented in note form or as oral and/or written responses to structured questions. Oral evidence should be scribed or recorded.

### **Outcome 4**

#### **Presentation**

The presentation will use a structure that allows analysis and evaluation of information, shows a clear and developing line of thought, reaches a conclusion that summarises and builds on what has gone before, uses language and features of delivery in an integrated way and uses complex language. Responding to others can be by using appropriate non-verbal signals, asking and answering questions, modifying approaches and/or developing the contributions of others to progress communication. Style and tone includes choice of vocabulary and register as well as articulation, and pace. Non-verbal techniques will include skilled use of eye contact, posture, and gesture.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Communication

### **Examples**

Speakers may use audio or visual materials to support a presentation. A discussion or tutorial with the purpose of exploring ideas in an academic or vocational context would be relevant and appropriate. There are opportunities for integration with other Outcomes or Units.

### **Assessment conditions**

Tasks should be undertaken in formal settings, in a group or one-to-one situations, in person, by telephone, videophone, video-conferencing and web cam or similar. Evidence to be retained for verification should be a recording of performance and/or a detailed observation checklist with any supporting materials and/or records.

### **Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit**

As they undertake the Unit candidates should be provided with opportunities to use language for a variety of purposes with a balance of productive and receptive uses, to read a variety of texts and graphical and pictorial representations which offer a range of reading demands, to use a range of written, graphic and pictorial forms, to listen to a variety of messages which offer a range of listening demands and to use a range of forms of oral communication.

Opportunities for reviewing, revising and evaluating are integral to skills development. In all types of writing and talking, assisting candidates in the use of a specified structure or agreed plan should ensure that a final text includes facts, opinions, arguments and a suitable conclusion as appropriate. Tasks which are intended to provide evidence for summative assessment must be completed by the candidate unaided but group work can contribute to the learning process. It is acceptable for assessors to clarify Evidence Requirements as summative work is undertaken. Precise but supportive formal feedback will be particularly helpful.

User-friendly candidate guides in standard fonts can provide both useful advice and clear examples of acceptable responses. Exemplar and reference material, including appropriate software when practical, should be available to support candidates. The use of technology for researching, communicating and presenting written and oral communication is to be encouraged although candidates without such resources should not be disadvantaged.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Communication

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ *Communication* (SCQF level 6)
- ◆ *Critical Thinking* (SCQF level 6)

Skills in *Problem Solving* — Critical Thinking, Planning, Organising, Reviewing and Evaluating — will be developed naturally as candidates undertake the Unit. Decisions are made on approaches, technologies and media as a plan of work is negotiated. Candidates will work within available resources, modifying original ideas as necessary to meet the requirements of briefs and deadlines. Formal review and evaluation of approaches taken to work will be integral to achievement.

Oral work will provide practical opportunities to enhance skills in *Working with Others*. Candidates will be required to analyse and understand the needs of others and be able to use techniques which can progress communication in group and one to one situations.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Linking Outcomes in assessment tasks is efficient and can reinforce the development of practical skills. Research involving reading and listening could be part of preparation for a discussion or one-to-one review, with a report or essay being written up either before or after the oral task. Integrating tasks can sometimes cover more than one type of communication and assess skills relevant to current work and future destinations. Assessors should look for ways in which evidence occurs in the context of skills development — for example research (Reading) and reporting (Writing and Oral Presentation), taking notes or recording the results of a class group discussion (Listening), discussing and evaluating complex issues (Speaking), possibly following a presentation by a class group member (Listening and Speaking). Questioning could additionally provide opportunities to explore understanding of written text(s) produced.

If a study programme is being undertaken, there may be the potential for some integration with other Units requiring written and/or oral evidence. A study programme which includes the Unit FA58 12 *Literature 1* may use a written or spoken response to literary texts which can be adapted to meet criteria for producing written or spoken Communication. Where candidates share and discuss viewpoints on literature or performances of texts, activities could provide a focus for the assessment of skills in group discussion. In such a situation it is important to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged by over-assessment, and that they are made fully aware of the need to achieve all the evidence for all Units involved on one occasion.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Communication

### **Opportunities for the use of e-assessment**

The problems associated with plagiarism should be discussed with candidates. Some written work may be undertaken outside the centre but conditions should be in place to ensure authenticity of all evidence submitted. Evidence of competence could be produced through a process requiring the candidate to submit the following at appropriate stages: outline plan, first draft, final version. Retention of draft work, and of any tracking records or e-mail exchanges between candidate and assessor can be a valuable aspect of quality assurance, mark progress and provide helpful information for the internal and external verification process.

Ideally there will be some recording of oral work in order to provide examples of standards for candidates as well as to support internal and external verification procedures. If an Observation Checklist is used as evidence of competence, assessor notes should be detailed and comprehensive.

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication 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)*.

### **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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