



## **National Unit specification: general information**

**Unit title:** Preparing to Volunteer (SCQF level 3)

**Unit code:** FR26 09

**Superclass:** PM

**Publication date:** September 2011

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### **Summary**

The purpose of this Unit is to enable candidates to develop an understanding of what volunteering is and the benefits of volunteering to themselves as volunteers. They will identify types of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) and plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

The Unit is suitable for a range of candidates. These could be school and college candidates, people wishing to develop and improve their employability skills in preparation for seeking work, or people seeking to improve other skills and learn through volunteering. School and college candidates undertaking this award are likely to be undertaking some type of volunteering as part of their overall learning experience. It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing this Unit will be able to progress to further study or volunteering work.

This is a mandatory Unit in the Award in Volunteering Skills at SCQF level 3 but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

### **Outcomes**

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of volunteering.
- 2 Identify the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer.
- 3 Prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

### **Recommended entry**

There are no specific entry requirements for this Unit, and entry is at the discretion of the centre. No previous experience of volunteering is required. It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing this Unit will be able to progress to further study or volunteering work.

## **National Unit specification: general information (cont)**

### **Credit points and level**

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 3: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 3\*)

*\*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 Core Skills component:

- ◆ Critical Thinking at SCQF level 3
- ◆ Planning and Organising at SCQF level 3

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

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

**Unit title:** Preparing to Volunteer

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**

Demonstrate an understanding of volunteering.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Describe in simple terms what volunteering means.
- (b) Identify different types of Volunteer Involving Organisations.
- (c) Identify the basic roles of the volunteer in a volunteering situation.

### **Outcome 2**

Identify the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify why people undertake volunteering roles.
- (b) Describe the main benefits of volunteering to the volunteer.

### **Outcome 3**

Prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify, through an initial self-assessment, own qualities, skills, attitudes, experience and interests.
- (b) Describe a volunteering opportunity which matches identified qualities, skills, attitudes, experience and interests.
- (c) Identify basic goals which could be achieved during a volunteering placement.
- (d) Carry out steps to prepare for a volunteering placement.
- (e) Describe the role to be undertaken during the volunteering placement.
- (f) Identify basic expectations of both the volunteer and the volunteer placement provider.

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

**Unit title:** Preparing to Volunteer

### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. The evidence will be generated holistically throughout the Unit, under open-book conditions, with directive support from the tutor.

#### Outcome 1

- ◆ A simple description of what volunteering means.
- ◆ A description of the three types of VIO — voluntary, statutory and private, giving one example of each.
- ◆ Identification of two possible volunteering roles.

#### Outcome 2

- ◆ Identification of two reasons why people undertake volunteering roles.
- ◆ Description of two main benefits of volunteering to the volunteer.

#### Outcome 3

- ◆ A simple self-assessment identifying the candidate's own qualities, skills, attitudes and experience.
- ◆ Brief description of a matching volunteering opportunity and the VIO in which the opportunity is based.
- ◆ Identification of the candidate's goals and expectations in undertaking the placement.
- ◆ Carrying out steps to prepare for a volunteering placement which must include as a minimum:
  - Finding out about the VIO
  - Obtaining volunteer role/task description
  - Contacting the VIO by making a telephone call/email and in person
  - Finding out about practicalities — transport and hours of work
  - Identification of basic expectations of the VIO

The candidate will be given a template to enable the production of the evidence required for self-assessment.

## National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit Title: Preparing to Volunteer

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

In this Unit candidates will develop understanding of what volunteering is and its benefits to themselves as a volunteer and identify types of volunteer involving organisations (VIO). Candidates will plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who have no previous experience of volunteering, or for candidates who have some volunteering experience. These could be school, and college candidates, people wishing to develop and improve their employability skills in preparation for seeking work, or people seeking to improve other skills and learn through volunteering.

The Unit will give individuals the opportunity to gain a national qualification which recognises their contribution to volunteering and the learning they gain as a result of being involved in activities additional to their formal learning. The Unit will link naturally to the development of essential skills, employability skills, transferable skills, active citizenship and the development of the skills and attributes of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence (to enable candidates to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors).

### Outcome 1

Initial input from the tutor and group discussion could be used to introduce the term of volunteering. From this a simple definition of volunteering could be developed. There is no one common national definition of volunteering, but at this level, volunteering could be described, using the Volunteering Compact Code of Practice definition or something similar in the candidate's own words:

'Any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.'

Candidates could then explore any volunteering opportunities/ organisations that they are aware of in their local communities. This could be achieved by group or individual local investigation, with the use of the internet for research, or through their prior knowledge or experience. They should be able to identify and describe different types of VIOs, eg 'VIOs are organisations that provide volunteering opportunities for prospective volunteers. Three categories of VIO are voluntary, private and statutory' and give examples, eg:

#### ◆ Voluntary organisations

Volunteering opportunities are widely available through many associations, eg Spina Bifida Association, housing associations, organisations such as WRVS (formerly the Women's Royal Voluntary Service), charity shops, credit unions, sports groups, community groups, environmental groups, uniformed youth groups, religious organisations, college opportunities such as peer mentoring, student associations and class reps.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit Title: Preparing to Volunteer

#### ◆ **Statutory organisations**

Many statutory organisations such as the NHS and Local Authorities encourage volunteer involvement, (as car drivers, ward visitors, on parent councils, paired reading schemes).

#### ◆ **Private**

While it is less common for private companies to engage members of the public as volunteers in the workplace, it is becoming more common to have employer supported volunteering schemes, where they encourage their own employees to do volunteering in their local community, eg RBS (Employee Volunteering Companies).

The above lists are not exhaustive.

Visits to local VIOs and/or guest speakers from volunteer organisations could help provide information leading to a basic understanding of different roles volunteers perform, eg charity shop assistants, stock controllers, customer care, animal care, buddy, marshal, etc.

### **Outcome 2**

Simple interviews and other opportunities to talk with volunteers could be used to find out why people volunteer and to give an insight into the main benefits of volunteering to the volunteer. Benefits could include experience, meeting new people, building confidence and self-esteem, learning new skills, better sense of purpose, developing 'soft skills' — communication, listening, etc. Candidates should also become familiar with the concept of the Volunteering Exchange — making a contribution while at the same time developing their own skills and interests — in order to support their learning on the benefits of volunteering to them as individuals.

### **Outcome 3**

A self-assessment template should be used to help the candidate identify their own qualities, skills, attitudes, experience and interests. Some candidates will lack confidence and will find this a challenging exercise and a substantial amount of tutor and or peer support may be required. The resultant self-assessment can be used to identify a set of basic goals and a volunteering opportunity which matches their identified skills and interests.

There are many self-assessment templates and information on goal-setting available on the internet via websites such as Planit Plus, and Skills Development Scotland.

As some candidates will find this Outcome challenging, substantial tutor support will be required. This may require the tutor to accompany the candidate/s to the identified volunteering organisation in the first instance, to help establish contacts and relationships between candidate and organisation, and address any transport and route issues. Tutors should aid in the production of a simple plan to prepare for a volunteer placement. This could involve preparing for selection process, eg:

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit Title: Preparing to Volunteer

- ◆ Obtaining role/task description
- ◆ Completing an application form/CV, PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) form
- ◆ Finding information on the volunteer placement
- ◆ Preparing to meet the VOl — dress, transport to venue
- ◆ Rehearsing answers to typical questions asked.

This could be done through simulation.

Tutor support may be required to establish the expectations of the volunteer and a series of questions could be formulated as a group to enable candidates to obtain the necessary information on roles and expectations.

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

A balance between tutor presentation and a candidate centred approach should be adopted throughout this Unit. This could involve activities such as:

- ◆ small group discussions
- ◆ investigation into VIOs in the local area
- ◆ input from guest speakers such as existing volunteers, representative from VIO and/or visits to VIO
- ◆ use of internet
- ◆ simulation
- ◆ completion of application forms/CV
- ◆ completion of PVG check, if applicable
- ◆ completion of self-assessment templates.

In addition to learning about volunteering, use of specific learning and teaching approaches and activities can provide candidates with an opportunity to develop the following skills for learning, life and work:

- ◆ Self-awareness and improvement — by carrying out a self-assessment and goal setting.
- ◆ Independent thinking and informed decision making — by making decisions about own skills/qualities/attributes/experience/interests and decisions on which VIO and role is best suited to the individual.
- ◆ Career development — carrying out self-assessment will provide an understanding of development needs; research into VIOs and voluntary roles will provide understanding of possible careers.
- ◆ Citizenship — through developing awareness of volunteering in general. Research, visits and guest speakers will provide understanding of the roles and contributions of VIOs.

It should be noted that volunteering has a cultural context and for candidates/learners of other nationalities, there may be no similar context of volunteering or it may have very different connotations which may prove to be a barrier to inclusion. Where this is the case, learning and teaching approaches should address these issues to ensure understanding prior to assessment tasks being undertaken.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit Title:** Preparing to Volunteer

### Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Candidates should receive directive support throughout the Unit whilst generating the evidence required to achieve each of the Outcomes. This means that the teacher/lecturer will issue explicit instructions to candidates to enable progress.

There are possibilities for a range of assessment methods. The Unit lends itself to holistic assessment through the compilation of a portfolio of evidence which could comprise some or all of the following elements:

- ◆ Candidate notes
- ◆ Recordings of interviews
- ◆ E-mails
- ◆ Assessor observation checklist
- ◆ Diaries
- ◆ Video
- ◆ Visual material, eg photographs, poster production, etc
- ◆ Templates — self-assessment/CV
- ◆ Volunteer task/job descriptions

### 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 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)*.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will develop an understanding of volunteering and its benefits. They will also identify types of volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) and plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

Candidates will:

- ◆ find out about volunteering and volunteering organisations
- ◆ find out about what volunteers do
- ◆ describe the benefits of volunteering
- ◆ carry out a self-assessment
- ◆ match skills and attitudes to a volunteering opportunity
- ◆ identify goals and expectations
- ◆ plan for a volunteering opportunity
- ◆ contact a placement organisation.

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

### **Unit Title:** Preparing to Volunteer

As candidates are doing this Unit there may be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 3.

In addition whilst completing this Unit candidates may develop aspects of the following Core Skills where specific learning and teaching approaches are adopted:

*Working with Others:* through participation in discussion and group work.

*Information and Communication Technology:* through use of internet for research and investigation of VIOs in the local area; to complete a CV.

### **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
02	Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 3 embedded.	29/09/2011

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