



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer (SCQF level 4)

Unit code: FR26 10

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 consider the aims of volunteering organisations and the benefits that engaging volunteers can bring to different 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 4 but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

Outcomes

- 1 Describe the characteristics of volunteering and Volunteer Involving Organisations.
- 2 Describe the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and the Volunteer Involving Organisation.
- 3 Plan and 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

National Unit specification: general information (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer (SCQF level 4)

successfully completing this Unit will be able to progress to further study or volunteering work.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit 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

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

- ◆ Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
- ◆ Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4

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

Describe the characteristics of volunteering and Volunteer Involving Organisations.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe clearly what volunteering means.
- (b) Describe different types of Volunteer Involving Organisations.
- (c) Describe the role of volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations.
- (d) Describe frontline activities or services provided by Volunteer Involving Organisations.

Outcome 2

Describe the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and the Volunteer Involving Organisation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify why people undertake volunteering roles.
- (b) Describe the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and the Volunteer Involving Organisation.

Outcome 3

Plan and prepare for a volunteering opportunity.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify clearly, through an initial self–assessment, own strengths, weaknesses, skills, attributes, experience, interests and motivation.
- (b) Describe a volunteering opportunity which matches identified skills and motivation.
- (c) Identify goals which could be achieved during volunteering placement.
- (d) Prepare and carry out a simple plan to prepare for a volunteering placement.
- (e) Describe the role to be undertaken during the volunteering placement.
- (f) Describe 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, and will comprise:

Outcome 1

- ◆ A simple definition of volunteering.
- ◆ A description of three types of VIO — to include voluntary, statutory and private, giving two examples of each, identifying their main role.
- ◆ A description of three possible volunteering roles.
- ◆ A description of two frontline services or activities provided by two identified VIOs.

Outcome 2

- ◆ Identification of at least two reasons why people undertake volunteering roles.
- ◆ Description of at least two benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and two benefits to VIOs.

Outcome 3

- ◆ Self-assessment identifying the candidate's own qualities, skills, attitudes, experience and motivation for volunteering.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Preparing and carrying out a simple plan which must include as a minimum:
 - producing a simple CV or completed application form
 - 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 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 knowledge and understanding of what volunteering is, understand its benefits to themselves and be able to explain the benefits to different types of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) of engaging volunteers. 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 4 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 Internet research, and the use of prior knowledge or experience. Through this activity candidates 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. Information relating to frontline services or activities of the VIOs could also be achieved through these activities:

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

◆ **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.

◆ **Statutory organisations**

Many statutory organisations such as the NHS and Local Authorities encourage volunteer involvement, (eg 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.

Outcome 2

Interviews and other opportunities to talk with volunteers and volunteer involving organisation employees could be used to find out why people volunteer.

Discussion and some input from tutor, visits and speakers can help to give an insight into the main benefits of volunteering to the volunteer and to the VOI. Benefits could include:

For the volunteer

- ◆ Development of self-esteem/confidence
- ◆ Making a difference/changing things/understanding of the cause of a charity
- ◆ Get out of the house/stop boredom and isolation
- ◆ Feel good/have fun
- ◆ Make new friends
- ◆ Receive training and gain experience
- ◆ Improve career prospects
- ◆ Gain recognition
- ◆ Feel valued
- ◆ Help others
- ◆ Share skills
- ◆ Improve CV
- ◆ Improve health

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

For the VIO

- ◆ Increases capacity
- ◆ Allows greater flexibility
- ◆ May give more geographical coverage
- ◆ Scope for development and experimentation
- ◆ Greater representation and influence from the community/into the community it serves
- ◆ Contributes to the ethos of the organisation
- ◆ Adds a new dimension
- ◆ New skills

This list is not exhaustive. 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 qualities, skills, attitudes, experience, interests and motivation. As some candidates may lack confidence some tutor and or peer support may be required. The resultant self-assessment can be used to develop the candidate's goals and, from there, a volunteering opportunity which matches their identified skills, interests and motivation.

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

Some tutor support may be required to establish contact with the identified volunteering organisation, and this may mean that the tutor will accompany the candidate on visits.

Tutors should give some advice in the production of a plan to prepare for a volunteering placement, eg:

- ◆ obtaining role/task description
- ◆ completing application form and CV
- ◆ finding information on volunteer placement
- ◆ preparing to meet the VOl — dress code, transport to venue, etc.
- rehearsing answers to typical questions — this could be done through simulation

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Preparing to Volunteer

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:

- ◆ group discussion
- ◆ use of internet
- ◆ investigation into VIOs in the local area
- ◆ input from guest speakers such as existing volunteer, representatives from VIOs and/or visits to VIOs.
- ◆ simulation for interview preparation
- ◆ completion of self-assessment templates
- ◆ completion of application forms
- ◆ completion of PVG (protection of vulnerable groups) check, if applicable.

This Unit will link naturally to the development of essential skills, employability skills, and active citizenship and should provide candidates with an opportunity to develop the following skills for life, learning and work:

- ◆ Self-awareness and improvement — by carrying out a self-assessment, measuring own performance and goal setting.
- ◆ Independent thinking and informed decision making — by making decisions about own skills/qualities/attributes/experience and interests, and decisions on which VIO and role to prepare for.
- ◆ Career development — carrying out self-assessment will provide an understanding of development needs, interests and motivations; research into VIOs and volunteer roles will provide understanding of possible careers, roles in the VIO and progression routes.
- ◆ Citizenship and community involvement — research, visits and guest speakers will provide understanding of the roles and contribution of VIO to society/community.
- ◆ Appreciation of values and beliefs — by understanding the work of the VIO.
- ◆ Interpersonal skills — through group work and interaction with others from the VIO.
- ◆ Diversity — through research and visits to 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 advice and support from the tutor at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

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
- ◆ e-mails
- ◆ Templates — self-assessment/CV
- ◆ Volunteer job/task descriptors
- ◆ Recordings of interviews
- ◆ Volunteer application form
- ◆ Assessor observation checklist
- ◆ Diaries
- ◆ Photographs

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 to themselves and VIOs
- ◆ carry out a self assessment
- ◆ match skills and motivation to a volunteering opportunity
- ◆ identify goals and expectations
- ◆ plan for a volunteering opportunity
- ◆ contact a placement organisation by phone and in person.

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 Core Skills of *Communication and Problem Solving* at SCQF level 4.

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

History of changes to Unit

| Version | Description of change | Date |
|---------|--|------------|
| 02 | Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4 embedded. | 30/09/2011 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2011

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre, telephone 0845 279 1000.