

National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

NUMBER D36H 12

COURSE

SUMMARY

Developing planning, organisational, investigative, interpersonal skills and self awareness through work experience.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Devise and organise a work experience placement to meet personal development goals.
- 2 Undertake a programme of work experience to a pre-planned specification.
- 3 Foster and maintain good working relationship in the analysis, planning and implementation of a work experience in testing circumstances.
- 4 Analyse and evaluate the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through work experience to own personal, social and vocational development.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate had achieved Work Experience (Intermediate 2) or equivalent.

CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit.

CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

Administrative Information

Superclass: HB

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National unit specification: statement of standards

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Devise and organise a work experience placement to meet personal development goals.

Performance Criteria

- a) An initial self-assessment clearly identifies qualities and skills and realistic personal development goals are set.
- b) Information from a wide range of sources is used to analyse suitable work experience placements to aid the organisation of a work experience.
- c) The work placement selected is the most relevant to personal goals and the selection is justified taking into account problems and consequences associated with different choices.
- d) Taking full account of own and others' strengths, a detailed application process for the work experience placement, which allows for alternative approaches if necessary, is devised and implemented.
- e) The placement contract is negotiated effectively, and includes plans for conducting a work-based project.
- f) Potential problems or limitations with the placement are identified accurately.
- g) Required preparations for implementing the work experience are organised efficiently and effectively and are comprehensive in terms of gathering essential information.
- h) Resources required to plan and implement the work experience and the project are selected and obtained.
- i) Arrangements are confirmed clearly and accurately.

Note on range for the outcome

Essential information: dates; working hours; initial contact; location.

Evidence Requirements

PC (a) An initial self assessment.

PCs (b)-(i) Plan for one work experience placement plus supporting written and/or oral evidence. The plan should include references to unfamiliar resources.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 2

Undertake a programme of work experience to a pre-planned specification.

Performance Criteria

- a) The programme of work is feasible in terms of timing, resources and personal development goals.
- b) The activities within the programme are planned and prioritised for maximum effectiveness.
- c) Regular review of the progress of the programme clearly shows flexibility of approach and problem solving skills.
- d) The work based project is implemented effectively and according to plan.
- e) The conclusions of the project are communicated clearly and accurately.
- f) Placement requirements and appropriate health, safety and hygiene requirements are observed at all times.
- g) The programme is completed to the required specification.

Note on range for the outcome

Placement requirements: times of attendance; appropriate dress; rules on use of equipment.

Evidence Requirements

PC (a) A programme of work for one work experience placement.

PCs (a)-(g) Performance evidence for one work experience placement.

Written and/or oral evidence which supports the work experience and the project.

OUTCOME 3

Foster and maintain good working relationships in the analysis, planning and implementation of a work experience placement in testing circumstances.

Performance Criteria

- a) Anticipated needs of peers and others are met with unsolicited advice and assistance.
- b) Advice is sought when required and evaluated effectively.
- c) Ideas, information and judgements and criticisms volunteered are relevant, accurate and sensible.
- d) Disagreement is dealt with sensitively and tactfully.
- e) Instruction and advice are responded to positively and constructively.
- f) Co-operative working relationships in unfamiliar situations are developed and initiated independently.
- g) A friendly, business like atmosphere is promoted through effective verbal and non-verbal behaviour.
- h) Appearance, manner and behaviour are appropriate to circumstances.
- i) Opinions of others during the placement are evaluated critically.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

Evidence Requirements

PCs (a)-(i) Performance evidence for one work experience placement.

OUTCOME 4

Analyse and evaluate the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through work experience to own personal, social and vocational development.

Performance Criteria

- a) The initial self assessment is analysed in terms of strengths and weaknesses and progress towards defined goals is evaluated objectively.
- b) Comments, feedback and advice from others, including the placement supervisor's report, are evaluated and recognised objectively in conclusions.
- c) Analysis of the planning and implementation of the work-based project is detailed, clear and accurate.
- d) Conclusions relating to the work experience, including feelings, reactions, and value of own contribution are expressed clearly, accurately and with insight.
- e) The original planning process for the work experience placement is evaluated critically.
- f) Suggestions for improvements to the original planning process are justified.
- g) Performance in task management skills and interpersonal skills is evaluated and related to future personal, social and vocational goals.

Evidence Requirements

PC (a) An updated self assessment.

PCs (b)-(g) Written and/or oral evidence for one work experience placement.

National unit specification: support notes

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

The unit is concerned with the development of high level skills and qualities in planning, organising and dealing with people and situations in preparing and undertaking a work experience placement. The development of the following skills are important features: a high degree of self-awareness in relation to examination of skills, abilities, interests and capabilities and the formulation of accurate personal development goals; investigating and examining different work routines and conventions; planning and organising; investigating the organisational structure, processes, operation and resources of placements; investigating and evaluating the requirements and career structure of placements. It is also designed to give candidates the opportunity to explore a particular vocational area in order that they may make more informed career choices.

Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Individual candidates, working independently, should analyse and assess their qualities, skills and interests in relation to work and career choice and set personal development goals. Their choice of work placement will be made after collating information from a range of sources which they have identified and comparing suitability of appropriate work placements. Candidates should match their goals with a suitable placement and negotiate a detailed contract with the placement provider. The contract should allow for the candidate's expressed goals to be pursued and the candidate should give evidence that the problems and consequences inherent in the chosen work programme have been considered. The contract should also outline a proposed work-based project (eg a study of career paths, training and qualification requirements; a technical study of the processes and products of an organisation; an investigation of a particular job carried out through work shadowing). Candidates will also be expected to record the planning and implementation of the work-based project and to present the findings.

The role of the tutor/trainer in this unit is that of consultant as candidates are expected to demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in planning and undertaking activities. The tutor/trainer should ensure that adequate provision is made for the candidate's health, safety and welfare.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

- 2 The contexts for work experience are wide ranging. The candidate should negotiate independently with the workplace supervisor a suitable programme of activities which will enable him or her to practise vocational skills and also to plan, organise and implement a work-based project. A detailed specification of this agreed contract between candidate and supervisor should be produced. The candidate should demonstrate that the programme which has been devised matches his or her identified goals and is feasible regarding factors such as timing and resources. The candidate should comply with the terms of this contract, ensuring that all workplace procedures and regulations are observed and building in opportunities for review of progress. The candidate should provide evidence that activities in both the work programme and the work-based project have been planned, prioritised and undertaken in a way which leads to maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Tutors/trainers and supervisors should be aware of the need to look for evidence of independent activity, flexibility of approach and problem solving. Appropriate guidelines on safety, insurance and other constraints must be observed.

Placement experience should be a minimum of 60 hours duration (at least 10 of these being devoted to the project) and should normally take place in one location. The project may be presented in a written and/or audiovisual format and evidence of conclusions should be clear and accurate.

- 3 An extremely high degree of interpersonal skills is required in this unit. Candidates are required to initiate co-operative working relationships and to anticipate and respond to the needs of others and to show that they can deal with disagreement in a sensitive and tactful way. The work programme and the project will provide the opportunity to use interpersonal skills in a wide range of contexts; to seek and evaluate advice and to show evidence of volunteering ideas and information, comments, criticisms and judgements. It will also enable candidates to present themselves in a manner appropriate to a variety of situations.
- 4 During and after the work placement each candidate should review the experience in order to assess personal strengths and weaknesses with a significant degree of insight and self-awareness. The initial self-assessment should be reconstructed to accommodate the learning gained and the candidate should identify progress towards developmental goals. The interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to evaluate and comment on the report of the workplace supervisor and to conduct a detailed explanation of the project findings. Conclusions should also reflect the candidate's ability to recognise comments, feedback and advice as well as his/her own personal feelings. Candidates should review in an objective, clear, complete and accurate way the value of the learning experience to their own personal, social and vocational development, in particular to future plans for work, education or training.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

The tutor's/trainer's role will be largely consultative and he or she will be a resource for planning, interview techniques, time management advice, planning of the work based project, information on health and safety, codes of practice etc. The tutor/trainer may also act as a general mentor should the candidate require support and encouragement.

It is expected that in the course of the unit each candidate will compile a folder of assessment evidence containing self-assessment sheets, a planning sheet for the work experience, log sheets which record the activities undertaken by the candidates during the work placement and, the findings of the work-based project and a final review sheet with reflections on the work experience and its relevance to personal and social development.

Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Induction to the unit including explanation of its key features and establishing working relationships.

Individual and group exercises to enable candidates to make a realistic assessment of their qualities and skills should be carried out. Tutors/trainers may ask candidates to extend their self-assessment to the production of a curriculum vitae which could be used when contacting the placement provider. The setting of personal goals should only be completed after the final choice of placement has been made.

Choice of work placement should be made after consideration of print materials, videos, experiences of group members, visits to work places, speakers, careers specialists etc. Many areas have local registers of companies and these can be used in addition to business directories, computer databases, Yellow Pages etc. Examples of previous programmes and contracts can be used to inform candidates and help them negotiate a work placement. Candidates must realise that they may not always be in a position to achieve precisely the contract they want and that compromise may be needed. Possible future use of a particular placement may depend on the candidate's tact and diplomacy in this matter. Considerable flexibility should be shown by the tutor/trainer to enable candidates to contact placements, attend interviews etc.

Communication skills can be integrated into this phase of the unit through letter writing, telephoning, interviewing, composition of curriculum vitae etc. Thus the candidate may learn how to operate effectively in formal situations. Equally as important are informal networks - making and using contacts, having the courage to ask, learning the work culture, tapping possible sources of information such as friends and family. Tutors/trainers may exploit such aspects by allowing candidates to brief and debrief one another in small groups.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Work Experience (Higher)

Role play, cases studies and videos may be used to prepare candidates for the type of activities in which they may be involved and to help them decide on appropriate use of skills and behaviours in a variety of situations.

- 2 Candidates should record experiences as they occur in log sheets/work diary and should be encouraged to monitor their own progress. The work supervisor should produce a short report to agreed specifications to record the candidate's performance and progress in the workplace. This report should cover not only vocational skills but also interpersonal skills and growth. Tutors/trainers should be careful to highlight the requirements of Outcome 3 and to emphasise the need for candidates to record their experiences in these areas.

The tutor/trainer should visit the candidate during the work placement. When all aspects of the work placement, including the project, have been agreed, the tutor/trainer and the candidate should set times for interim review sessions. In many areas of work experience the tutor's/trainer's knowledge may not exceed that of the candidate. It is important to recognise this limitation and for the tutor/trainer to play a supportive role.

- 3 All learning activities should be designed to develop personal and social development skills. Initially the role of the tutor/trainer is to offer support and active guidance to the candidates. However, candidates must have the opportunity to do things for themselves, to make choices and decisions, to ask for assistance from the tutor/trainer and others when this is felt to be necessary, to interact with others and to try out new activities and new roles in a climate which feels safe.

The work placement will be a new environment for many candidates and preparation for the placement should recognise this so that candidates are thoroughly prepared before commencing the placement.

- 4 In an interview with each individual, the tutor/trainer will discuss the activities undertaken throughout the unit and the feelings of the candidates towards these. The interviews should be of sufficient length to allow a thorough investigation of the candidate's learning. Tutors/trainers should not prompt performance but should create an atmosphere and framework within which candidates are encouraged to speak openly about their progress towards the defined goals, their feelings and reactions in relation to the tasks undertaken and the contribution which the learning activities have made towards their personal and social development.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

During the unit the candidate is required to contribute to the planning and to complete a work experience placement during which he or she should assemble a folder of assessment evidence in relation to the outcomes. Personal interviews are central to the assessment and will be used to explore the candidate's experiences in the work placement in relation to the stated performance criteria.

The tutor/trainer may conduct personal interviews with individual candidates or with groups, as appropriate. The interviews will take place on an ongoing basis throughout the unit and should draw on relevant evidence from the candidate's assessment folder.

Centres may use the Instruments of Assessment which are considered by tutors/trainers to be the most appropriate. Examples of Instruments of Assessment which could be used are as follows:

Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

1. Personal interview drawing on evidence from planning and self-assessment sheets.
2. Personal interview drawing on evidence from placement contract, log sheets, work based project and reports from the workplace supervisor and from the tutor/trainer.
3. Personal interview drawing on evidence from log sheets and reports from the workplace supervisor and the tutor/trainer.
4. Personal interview using self-assessment sheet and review sheet.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements* (SQA, 1998).