



PROBLEM SOLVING
SCQF Level 3
40 Hour Unit (F3GD 09)

CORE SKILLS UNIT

What are Core Skills?

Core Skills are skills and abilities that everyone uses in their family and personal life, at work, in public, in the community, and in education and training.

The Core Skills are:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

They are important because they help you to be effective in almost everything you do. That's also why employers value them.

Improving your Core Skills helps you cope with today's quickly changing world. It will make you more confident, help you to learn more easily, and improve your career prospects.

What is this Core Skills Unit about?

This Unit is about solving simple problems in familiar, everyday settings.

If there are any words you don't understand in this Unit, your tutor will explain them to you.

What should I know or be able to do before I start?

You may have achieved the Core Skills Unit in Problem Solving at SCQF level 2. Alternatively, you may be able to show that you have similar experience of problem solving, for example organising a birthday party for someone or arranging for a visiting speaker to talk to a group of fellow students.

What will I need to do?

You will:

- ◆ recognise the main factors affecting a simple situation or issue (for example, what are the causes of the problem and why has the situation arisen)
- ◆ decide on a course of action to solve the problem, asking for help if you need it (for example, from your tutor or other learners)
- ◆ work out an action plan to deal with the problem (for example, what steps do you need to do and in which order should the steps be done)
- ◆ choose what you need to carry out the action plan (for example, equipment, information, money, or help from other people)
- ◆ carry out the action plan, checking it is complete
- ◆ decide how effective your action plan was, using a checklist suggested by your tutor (for example, did your action plan run to time and did you have enough resources)

Your tutor will offer you time to practise your skills.

How do I get this Unit?

You will need to show that you have all the skills in the Unit.

You will investigate a problem, draw up an action plan to try to solve the problem, and carry it out. Then, you will review how effective your action plan has been.

You may have written evidence, such as notes of discussions, the action plan itself, records of steps you undertook, and your thoughts on how well things went.

Your tutor may ask you questions and make notes or a recording of what you have said.

What might this involve?

Here are some examples of problems you might solve:

- ◆ Your DVD player is not working. You read the instruction book and then work through it to find the source of the problem.
- ◆ At school/college you find that you have too many assignments to do within the next two weeks. You look at the assignments, then check the other work you have to do and the time you have available. How are you going to do everything?
- ◆ Customers often supply you with the wrong information in your job. You look into this and find out that some of your workmates send out letters to customers that are not clear. You design a template letter that tells customers exactly what is needed.

What can I do next?

You could move on to the Problem Solving Core Skills Unit at SCQF level 4.

You could think about doing other Core Skills Units in:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Working with Others

Your tutor can advise you about this.

Guidance for tutors

At SCQF level 3 learners are expected to be able to work with simple problems in a context that is familiar to them. They will require support to carry out the problem solving activity.

There are three stages to the problem solving process that are assessed by this Unit: the critical thinking stage, the planning and organising stage, and the reviewing and evaluating stage.

Critical thinking

You should support the learners to recognise and analyse the main factors affecting a simple situation or issue in a context that is familiar to them. There will be a small number of obvious variables and the relationship between these variables will be clear to the learners. If the simple situation or issue is less familiar to the learners, then you should supply the variables. With your support, and/or the support of others as necessary, each learner should identify a process that will provide a solution to the problem.

Planning and organising

You should support the learners in developing an action plan. At this level the action plan should include a small number of clear steps. If the problem is less familiar to the learners then these steps should be selected by you and they should be familiar to the learners.

You should discuss resources with the learners and these should be selected from a familiar range appropriate to the activity. Resources might include sources of information, set procedures, people, equipment, and physical resources.

Once the action plan has been worked out you should support the learners in carrying it out. This could include the allocation of some steps to others.

Reviewing and evaluating

On completion of the problem solving activity, you should support the learners in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their action plan. You should use simple, given criteria for this and encourage learners to be aware that the skills they have used in solving this problem are transferable to other simple situations or issues in the wider context of life.

Learners must use only one problem solving activity to prove that they can meet all of the requirements of the Unit. They should not gather evidence from different problem solving activities.

Further guidance is available in the accompanying Assessment Support Pack.

Disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual learners 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Credit value

6 SCQF credit points (1 SQA credit) at SCQF level 3



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Helpdesk: 0845 279 1000
Fax: 0845 213 5000
E-mail: customer@sqa.org.uk
Website: www.sqa.org.uk

Optima Building	Ironmills Road
58 Robertson Street	Dalkeith
Glasgow	Midlothian
G2 8DQ	EH22 1LE

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