



PROBLEM SOLVING

SCQF Level 4

WORKPLACE CORE SKILLS UNIT

What are Core Skills?

Core Skills are skills and abilities that everyone needs in their work. This is true for every job in every workplace.

The Core Skills are:

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

Employers look for Core Skills when they are appointing new staff. They also expect their existing staff to have these skills.

Core Skills are important because they help you work effectively in your present job and also prepare you for jobs that you will do in future. Developing your Core Skills helps you deal with today's rapidly changing world and improve your career prospects.

What is this Core Skills Unit about?

This Unit is about solving straightforward problems in the workplace.

It is important to note that the focus of this Unit is about how you deal with problems and not whether the problem was completely solved.

Your assessor will explain anything in this Unit that you do not understand.

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

You should either:

- ◆ have achieved the Core Skills Unit in Problem Solving at SCQF level 3 or an equivalent qualification

or

- ◆ be able to show that you have some experience of solving problems in the workplace, for example improving letters that are sent to customers; improving signage to make it easier for visitors to find your office

What do I need to do?

You will need to carry out each of the following three tasks.

Task 1: Investigating

Investigate reasons why a straightforward problem related to your work has arisen. The problem will be one that might be dealt with in several different ways, but will occur in a familiar situation. You will need to carry out a number of steps to deal with the problem. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ recognise the main reasons for the problem, situation, or issue, for example:
 - ◆ what are the causes of the problem
 - ◆ why has the situation arisen
 - ◆ who is involved?

- ◆ decide on an approach to deal with the problem

Task 2: Planning and solving

Plan, organise, and carry out a straightforward activity to deal with the problem. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ work out an action plan to deal with the problem, for example:
 - ◆ what are the tasks involved
 - ◆ in which order should the tasks be done
 - ◆ who should do each task
 - ◆ are there any limitations you must work within
 - ◆ do you need permission to carry out any tasks in your action plan?
- ◆ choose and get the resources you will need to carry out your action plan, for example:
 - ◆ equipment
 - ◆ information
 - ◆ money
 - ◆ input from other people
- ◆ carry out your action plan

Task 3: Checking and evaluating

Check how well your approach to the problem-solving activity worked in practice. To do this you will have to:

- ◆ identify the strengths and weaknesses of your problem-solving activity, for example:
 - ◆ did you identify the main reasons for the problem
 - ◆ did the action plan run to time
 - ◆ did everyone carry out their allotted tasks
 - ◆ did you allocate enough resources?
- ◆ suggest ways of solving similar problems in future based on this experience

How will I show that I have achieved this Unit?

You will need evidence to show that you have achieved all the tasks in this Unit.

Some of the evidence might come from your assessor watching you carrying out some tasks that are part of your problem-solving activity. In addition, your assessor may ask you questions to check your knowledge, understanding, and practical abilities, and make notes or a recording of what was said/done.

You may have video evidence or written evidence, such as notes of discussions with colleagues, the action plan itself, records of activities that you have undertaken, and your thoughts on how well things went.

You must choose one problem-solving activity to show that you can do all three tasks. You are not allowed to gather evidence from different problem-solving activities.

What might be involved?

This Unit may be achieved in many ways. Examples of tasks you might do are:

- ◆ Your firm keeps running out of the parts required to do a particular repair job. You look at the reasons for this and set up a straightforward system for re-ordering parts that makes sure that they are always available.
- ◆ Customers complain that deliveries are not made at the times that they have specified. You look at the reasons for this and devise a system to ensure that delivery schedules are met.

What can I do next?

You could move on to the Problem Solving Core Skills Unit at SCQF level 5.

You could consider doing other Core Skills Units in:

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

Your assessor can advise you about this.

Guidance for assessors

Further information about delivery, assessment, and evidence requirements for this Unit can be found in the corresponding Assessment Support Pack. In addition, the *Guide to Assessing Workplace Core Skills* provides further information on assessment.

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 alternative competence standards for Units.

Additional advice and guidance for learners with disabilities and/or additional support needs should initially be discussed with the centre where the learner is registered.

If the centre is unable to offer a satisfactory solution then the learner, usually in conjunction with the centre, should contact the External Verifier of the Awarding Body where the learner is registered for certification.

Becoming an approved awarding body

Workplace core skills may only be offered by an SQA approved awarding body. Information on how to become an 'approved' Awarding Body is published on SQA Accreditation's website.

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/48712.html>

Unit reference codes

This workplace core skills unit is offered by a number of different awarding bodies. The unit reference codes for each awarding body offering this workplace core skills unit are as follows:

http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Workplace_Core_Skills_Table.pdf

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Credit Value

6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4



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