



# **Core Skills Framework: an introduction**

## **Working with Others**

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## Introduction

Core Skills enable people to put their knowledge, skills and understanding into action flexibly, adapting them to new situations. Core Skills apply to a wide range of contexts in education and training, in life, and in work. They underpin and promote the development of learning and study skills, and provide a foundation for lifelong learning and personal development.

The importance of Core Skills is widely recognised in employment and education. Lifelong learning that builds on people's Core Skills is essential if individuals are to fulfil their personal needs and meet the needs of society. In the workplace, employees at every level are increasingly expected to take responsibility for the quality of the products and services they produce or provide. Individuals who can analyse and solve problems, communicate well, use information technology, and work with others effectively, are well-equipped to assume the active, flexible and responsible roles that modern workplaces need.

A wide variety of skills and qualities are developed and used in education and training, in work and in life. Some of these are 'core' to personal development and performance.

First, there are skills for **tackling issues and problems**. These skills include being able to:

- ◆ think critically and creatively
- ◆ analyse situations and suggest courses of action
- ◆ plan and organise what is involved and carry it through to completion
- ◆ reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future

Second, there are skills that are vital in enabling individuals to function effectively. **Communication**, both orally and in writing, is essential for clarifying your own thoughts, for relating to others, and for learning and working. The **numerical skills** involved in processing, interpreting, and communicating information can help you to understand, predict, and solve many types of problem. Skills in **using information and communication technology** are increasingly essential for obtaining and analysing information, for organising your ideas, and for communicating and working with others. And being able to **work with others** means having interpersonal skills that help you to co-operate with others in personal, learning and working situations to identify and achieve your shared goals.

## The Core Skills

Each Core Skill, and its components, can be assessed at SCQF levels 2–6. This section gives you a brief description of each component, and describes the range of activities that its assessment will involve at the different levels.

### Core Skill: Problem Solving

The three components of this skill are the stages involved in tackling issues and problems in personal, social, and work contexts. They are often used in sequence, and repeatedly. Each component can also be a focus of activity in its own right.

#### Component: Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is about using analysis and reasoning to make decisions and to create or suggest ideas, courses of action, and strategies. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ working in situations that involve a few, easily-identified factors set in familiar contexts

to:

- ◆ working in more complex situations that require a greater degree of analysis before approaches can be devised

#### Component: Planning and Organising

Planning and Organising is the ability to plan a task, taking account of available resources, and to manage the task to completion. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ creating plans involving a small number of steps and using familiar resources

to:

- ◆ efficient management of a more complex plan, which may include a review of strategy and a degree of research in identifying the resources to be used to deal with difficulties

#### Component: Reviewing and Evaluating

Reviewing and Evaluating is the ability to reflect on and review the process of tackling issues and problems, to evaluate the outcomes, and to identify where alternative strategies might have been used. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ identifying a strength and weakness in a strategy

to:

- ◆ identifying and gathering evaluation evidence, evaluating strategies, and making appropriate recommendations

## **Core Skill: Communication**

Communication skills underpin almost all personal, social, learning, and working activity. They are essential in clarifying your thoughts, in interacting and conversing effectively with others, and in conveying information, feelings, and opinions.

### **Component: Oral Communication**

Oral Communication means being able to take part in discussions and make presentations, interacting with your audience as appropriate. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ conveying basic information and opinions through short, informal communications on familiar topics

to:

- ◆ presenting and analysing complex information and issues through more sustained discussions or presentations on complex topics, as well as listening and responding to what others say

### **Component: Written Communication**

Written Communication is the ability to write and respond to writing (reading). Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ dealing with brief communications expressing a few basic ideas or pieces of information about familiar topics

to:

- ◆ dealing with communications which analyse and explore complex information and issues

## **Core Skill: Numeracy**

To cope with the demands of everyday life, including work and study, people need to be comfortable with numbers and with graphs, symbols, diagrams, and calculators. The skills needed for this involved interpreting, processing, and communicating, quantifiable and spatial information.

### **Component: Using Graphical Information**

This is the ability to interpret and communicate quantifiable information that is given in writing, diagrams, or pictures. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ working in familiar contexts with simple, specified tables, graphs and shapes

to:

- ◆ working in more abstract contexts and with more complex graphical information which may require some analysis, and where decisions have to be made on effective ways to communicate the information

### **Component: Using Number**

This is the ability to apply numerical and other relevant mathematical and statistical skills. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ working confidently with basic numbers in everyday contexts

to:

- ◆ working confidently with more complex numerical concepts and techniques in more abstract contexts

### **Core Skill: Information and Communication Technology**

Information and Communication Technology is concerned with the electronic collection, organisation, analysis, presentation, and communication of information. It encompasses all media types and formats as well as all relevant tools.

The Core Skill focuses on the ability to use information and communication technology to process information in a variety of ways which will be necessary for further learning in work and in the home. It is not about developing IT specialists who will act as first-line support for others or install specialist systems.

This is a rapidly progressing area. While the standards and examples given provide a snapshot for 2013, the framework has been designed to be flexible enough to accommodate any further digital skills deemed essential for everyday use.

### **Component: Accessing Information**

This is the ability to use information and communication technology to support a range of information-accessing activities. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ accessing basic information and communication technology to perform simple processing of familiar data and to select information from a local database or a simple internet search

to:

- ◆ making effective, responsible, and secure use of information and communication technology, using application software in a context requiring some analysis and evaluation, and retrieving information from a range of sources

### **Component: Providing/Creating Information**

This is the ability to use information and communication technology to provide, create, and process information. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ using familiar application software to carry out very simple processing tasks and providing/creating very simple information technology

to:

- ◆ using a range of information and communication technology in unfamiliar contexts, observing security procedures and the needs of other users. Evaluating and sharing information

### **Core Skill: Working with Others**

The fact that Working with Others is a Core Skill emphasises the importance of co-operation and teamwork in social, learning, and working situations. Working with Others has two components: Working Co-operatively with Others, and Reviewing Co-operative Contribution.

While achieving a shared goal is the main focus, co-operation with others should be developed through all stages of any collaboration.

Reviewing your own contribution and learning through reflection also has a wider application to personal development.

### **Component: Working Co-operatively with Others**

This is about using interpersonal skills appropriately, to recognise and value the roles of other people, taking responsibility for your own contribution, and supporting co-operative working in appropriate ways. Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ identifying, with support, your own role and the roles of other people, and helping to achieve a shared goal

to:

- ◆ analysing the roles and behaviour of others and adapting your own behaviour to deal with the complexity of changing and challenging dynamics

### **Component: Reviewing Co-operative Contribution**

This is the ability to discuss the process of working co-operatively with other people, reflecting on and reviewing the collaboration. This might include commenting or resolving issues and handling other people's behaviour.

Learners should evaluate the outcomes, identify the value of their own contribution, and reflect on any personal learning and development that may be needed to enhance their contribution to future collaborative work.

Attainment levels range from:

- ◆ identifying a strength and weakness in the way you helped achieve things together, suggesting how your own contribution could be strengthened in the future

to:

- ◆ identifying and gathering evidence, critically evaluating your own contribution, and making appropriate recommendations about future learning and contributions



## Core Skills certification

Since 1999, candidates for SQA qualifications have been able to show what they have achieved in Core Skills.

Candidates with Standard Grades will already have a Core Skills profile. Also, many candidates undertaking key National Courses, supporting Curriculum for Excellence, should get a Core Skills profile. The Core Skills Profile is reviewed each time they achieve a new SQA qualification. There is no need for candidates to achieve all Core Skills, or to complete a Group Award. Their profile will report their Core Skills achievements by component — so Core Skills certification is available to those who do not complete a whole Core Skill.

With increasing emphasis being placed on Core Skills in education (including higher education), training, and employment, it is important that candidates are given the opportunity to be credited for what they can do.

Candidates can achieve Core Skills through:

- ◆ any Unit, Course or Award which has been audited against the Core Skills framework and validated as fully covering one or more Core Skills component
- ◆ named Core Skills Units

In the former case, certification will be automatic. Candidates will not need to enter for the Core Skills component — the entry on the Core Skills profile will be generated automatically by SQA when they achieve the relevant Unit, Course or Award.

Named Core Skills Units are available for use by schools, colleges, higher education institutions, and training providers, and in the workplace.

## The purpose of this document

The remainder of this document provides detailed technical specifications for each Core Skill for use by those designing programmes of learning and teaching in Scotland. This document should support practitioners in the teaching and learning of Core Skills, this does not always have to be tied to certification. It can also be used for auditing Units, Courses, Awards, assessment programmes, and Group Awards, and by SQA staff.

The document gives definitions of the Core Skills at each level and the specific skills in each. It also gives details of how the skills could be applied by the candidate. The further information section should be interpreted in the context of the Unit/Course. The section is not a list of mandatory requirements. It gives examples of how a candidate can show the development of the specific skills.

# Working with Others

## Examples of tasks might include:

- ◆ **Level 2:** In a classroom or workroom, with support, work co-operatively to re-organise a seating plan and display of work or information. With support, assess own contribution to activity and/or activities and identify some objectives for future learning.
  
- ◆ **Level 3:** Work co-operatively to carry out an investigation on a topic of local interest including, with limited support, the identification of roles within the group. The investigation should involve the gathering and collating of information, and presenting results. The candidate should be able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of their contribution to the co-operative activity and/or activities, accept feedback and advice, and identify some objectives for future learning.
  
- ◆ **Level 4:** In an educational, community or work context, work co-operatively to carry out a money-raising event in support of a charitable appeal such as Children in Need. The roles should be identified, given the collective strengths and weaknesses, and should be adapted to accommodate emerging difficulties. The candidate should refer to supporting evidence in carrying out an evaluation of their performance within the co-operative activity and/or activities. They should identify their own learning from the experience and, considering the involvement of others, evaluate their own and overall co-operative working.
  
- ◆ **Level 5:** Working co-operatively, through clearly identified roles, to implement a promotional activity and/or activities to increase attendance at a community event. Individuals should be pro-active in adapting their own role as the activity and/or activities progress, and should seek and offer support to others involved, whilst being aware of emerging/changing roles. The candidate should decide on their own criteria for evaluating their contribution to the co-operative activity and/or activities. Using the selected criteria and considering the involvement of others, the candidate should evaluate their own and overall co-operative working, referring to supporting evidence. Conclusions should be justified in relation to the evidence gathered.
  
- ◆ **Level 6:** Devise, promote and implement a project to reduce waste in a workplace. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses should be conducted and roles identified appropriately. The project may include measures such as recycling and improving energy efficiency. The complexity of the roles within the activity and/or activities should be reflected in the candidate's ability to adapt their role and behaviour to accommodate changing and challenging interpersonal situations. Considering the involvement of others, the candidate should analyse and evaluate both their own and the overall co-operative working, referring to supporting evidence. The candidate should draw conclusions and justify these, providing recommendations for future co-operative working based on the evaluative process.

## Working Co-operatively with Others

SCQF 2

### General skill

In very simple interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities, with support.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify own role and the roles of others involved
- ◆ ask for, and/or give, information and support from/to others involved in a helpful way

### Further information

The co-operative activity and/or activities should be capable of being broken down into very simple tasks and/or roles and should be similar to activities already practised by the candidate. The interpersonal skills should be very simple.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ identifying own role within the co-operative activity and/or activities
- ◆ co-operating with others — eg by assisting in the task, recognising preferences, providing information, offering to help, being polite and/or asking for help
- ◆ turning up on time

## Working Co-operatively with Others

SCQF 3

### General skill

In simple interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify own role and the roles of others involved, adapting own role as necessary, with limited support
- ◆ ask for, and/or give, relevant information and appropriate support from/to others in a helpful way

### Further information

The co-operative activity and/or activities may be relatively unfamiliar but should have a clear aim and be capable of being broken down into simple roles. The roles themselves should be familiar to the candidate. The interpersonal skills should be simple.

The candidate can should this through:

- ◆ identifying own role within the co-operative activity and/or activities
- ◆ co-operating with others — eg listen and respond appropriately to the needs and wishes of others; show consideration for needs of others, being reliable
- ◆ adapting role, with limited support, to overcome difficulties, if they arise

The candidate may need some support to understand the tasks to be undertaken and interpersonal skills involved. The candidate will then adhere to responsibilities allocated, but display a willingness to adapt own role, with limited support, should difficulties arise.

## Working Co-operatively with Others

SCQF 4

### General skill

In straightforward interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify the main roles which make up the activity and/or activities, the individual's role, and the roles of others
- ◆ work co-operatively to identify the relationships between the roles which make up the activity and/or activities, adapting own role as necessary
- ◆ actively seek, and/or provide, relevant and appropriate support from/to others

### Further information

The overall goal for the co-operative activity and/or activities should be clear and the activity and/or activities should be capable of being broken down into separate roles. This may include recognising individual preferences. Relationships between component roles should be straightforward. The interpersonal skills should also be straightforward.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ working with others to identify the individual roles within the activity and/or activities and the relationships between them
- ◆ responding sensitively to the needs of others — eg in recognising any strengths, skills, and preferences
- ◆ seeking and offering support — eg by praising, encouraging, sharing resources, demonstrating, or explaining
- ◆ being pro-active in adapting own role and performance to accommodate any emerging difficulties

The candidate may need some limited support to adapt their own role and behaviours and interpersonal skills involved to accommodate any emerging difficulties.

## Working Co-operatively with Others

SCQF 5

### General skill

In interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify own role and the roles which make up the activity and/or activities and the relationships between them
- ◆ organise own role to contribute effectively to the activity and/or activities, adapting role as necessary
- ◆ pro-actively seek support and advice from others
- ◆ pro-actively provide support and advice to others to complete the activity and/or activities

### Further information

The overall goal for the co-operative activity and/or activities should be clear and the activity and/or activities should be capable of being broken into separate roles which may be complex. Relationships between roles may not be immediately obvious. The interpersonal skills needed may be varied, some of which may be challenging.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ working with others to identify the requirements of the activity and/or activities and the roles and relationships between them
- ◆ encouraging co-operative working — eg anticipating the needs of others, keeping others informed of progress, taking time to praise
- ◆ making and/or accepting suggestions and alter own role and behaviour appropriately to deal with any difficulties — eg maintaining an open mind to others' ideas
- ◆ contributing to any decision making, managing any emerging role changes and resolving any behavioural conflict — eg keeping calm in difficult situations/ circumstances
- ◆ taking responsibility for helping others (without being asked) and to ask for help/ advice/views, etc rather than waiting for it to be offered

The candidate may need some limited support to manage behavioural conflict, interpersonal skills involved and emerging role changes.

## Working Co-operatively with Others

SCQF 6

### General skill

In complex interactions, work with others co-operatively on an activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ analyse own role and the roles that make up the activity and/or activities and the relationship between them
- ◆ organise own role to contribute effectively to the activity and/or activities, adapting own role as necessary
- ◆ negotiate working methods
- ◆ promote co-operative working with others, progress towards shared goal
- ◆ use interpersonal skills effectively

### Further information

The overall goal for the co-operative activity and/or activities should be clear and should be capable of being broken down into separate tasks which may be complex. Relationships and roles will not be obvious and the candidate should be able to identify emerging role changes and adapt own behaviour to accommodate changing dynamics.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ analysing the requirements of the roles and relationships between them
- ◆ negotiating working methods consistent with available resources
- ◆ promoting co-operative working towards a consensus — eg by offering encouragement; valuing diversity; sharing resources; modifying behaviour to meet the needs of different colleagues and situations; dealing with disagreement sensitively
- ◆ encouraging positive motivation to progress and overcome any barriers and/or difficulties
- ◆ independently managing behavioural conflict such as challenging interpersonal situations for example aggressive, passive or manipulative behaviours, in a mature way

## Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

SCQF 2

### General skill

Review own work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities, with support.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify a strength and an area for improvement of own contribution to co-operative working
- ◆ identify some very simple objectives for future learning

### Further information

Very simple criteria or structured questions should be provided to support the candidate's review of their own contribution and identification of future learning needs.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ reviewing own contribution to the co-operative activity and/or activities, using some very simple given criteria or questions as prompts
- ◆ giving examples of their own contribution
- ◆ identifying some objectives for improvement of own skills, using some very simple given criteria or questions as prompts

The candidate may need feedback and/or advice when considering objectives for their future learning.



## Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

SCQF 3

### General skill

Review own work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify strengths and areas for improvement of own contribution to co-operative working
- ◆ identify some simple objectives for future learning

### Further information

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ identifying some simple evaluation criteria
- ◆ reviewing own contribution to the activity and/or activities using selected criteria
- ◆ considering feedback and/or advice
- ◆ identifying some objectives for improvement of own skills, using some simple criteria or questions

The candidate may need some support in identifying and selecting the criteria to be used for evaluation. The candidate may also need limited support when identifying objectives.

## Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

SCQF 4

### General skill

Review work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ identify own strengths and weaknesses of contribution to co-operative working
- ◆ evaluate overall co-operative working, considering own involvement and the involvement of others, referring to supporting evidence
- ◆ identify own learning and some objectives for future co-operative working

### Further information

The candidate will decide the criteria and evidence for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, and for evaluating their contribution to the co-operative working. The candidate will recognise new or improved skills acquired in co-operative working and will identify some objectives for future co-operative working.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ identifying evaluation criteria
- ◆ evaluating own contribution and the contribution of others to co-operative working using the identified criteria
- ◆ receiving and considering feedback and advice
- ◆ identifying some objectives for improvement both of own skills, and of future co-operative working

The candidate may need limited support when identifying objectives for the improvement of future co-operative working.

## Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

SCQF 5

### General skill

Review work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ evaluate overall co-operative working, considering own involvement and the involvement of others, referring to supporting evidence
- ◆ draw conclusions and justify them with reference to supporting evidence
- ◆ identify own learning and objectives for future co-operative working

### Further information

The candidate will decide the criteria for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and those of the overall co-operative process, presenting evidence to justify their conclusions. The candidate will identify new or improved skills acquired and some objectives for future co-operative working.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ developing evaluation criteria
- ◆ evaluating own contribution and the contribution of others to co-operative working using the evaluation criteria
- ◆ drawing and justifying conclusions with supporting evidence
- ◆ receiving and considering feedback and advice
- ◆ using results of own reflection and feedback received from others to identify objectives for any improvement of own skills and of future co-operative working

The evaluation criteria should consider roles, interaction and interpersonal contributions of others involved in the co-operative activity and/or activities.

## Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

SCQF 6

### General skill

Review work with others in a co-operative activity and/or activities.

### Specific skills

The candidate must:

- ◆ evaluate overall co-operative working, considering own involvement and the involvement of others, referring to supporting evidence
- ◆ draw conclusions and justify them with reference to supporting evidence
- ◆ identify learning objectives based on the evaluation and make recommendations for future co-operative working

### Further information

The candidate will develop criteria for analysing and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the overall co-operative working. Based on the information gathered, the candidate will draw conclusions, presenting evidence to justify them. The candidate will provide recommendations for future co-operative working.

The candidate can show this through:

- ◆ developing evaluation criteria
- ◆ receiving and considering feedback and advice
- ◆ evaluating own contribution and the contribution of others to co-operative working using the evaluation criteria
- ◆ drawing conclusions and justifying them with reference to supporting evidence
- ◆ using reflection and feedback received to identify learning objectives and make recommendations for any future co-operative working

The evaluation criteria should consider roles, interaction, and interpersonal contributions of others involved in the co-operative activity and/or activities.