



National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

NUMBER D01B09

COURSE

SUMMARY

This core skills unit seeks to develop the ability to respond to and produce simple brief written and oral communication which is familiar and routine to the candidate's setting. This unit is designed to develop communication skills at a basic level. It should guide the candidate towards the acquisition of broadly-based skills in common language contexts, helping the candidate to maintain social and working relations.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Respond to simple written communication.
- 2 Produce simple written communication.
- 3 Produce and respond to simple oral communication.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained Communication (Access 2).

CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit at Access 3.

Administrative Information

Superclass: KB

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CORE SKILLS

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

The attainment of this unit will lead to the automatic award of:

- Communication at Access 3.

National unit specification: statement of standards

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

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.

Note on range for the unit

The outcomes should be demonstrated in relation to material which is familiar and routine to the candidate's setting.

OUTCOME 1

Respond to simple written communication.

Performance Criteria

- a) Identify the purpose of a communication.
- b) Identify the significant ideas or main points of information in the communication.
- c) Make a basic evaluation of the communication supported by a single piece of evidence.

Evidence Requirements

Written or spoken evidence that on one occasion the candidate has read an appropriate non-fiction text and shown understanding of basic information and an ability to make a single, simple evaluation of the communication. All performance criteria *must* be met within one task.

Simple written communication

Non-fiction texts must be used. Texts will be related to the candidate's personal experience, an area of study or the work setting. The communication will be brief, clearly presented and will contain several items of information. The content will be expressed in a direct, uncomplicated way and the key points will be explicit. The vocabulary will be familiar to the candidate and sentences will be simple in structure. Where linkage occurs, it will be straightforward.

OUTCOME 2

Produce simple written communication.

Performance Criteria

- a) The techniques used are mainly appropriate for the writer's purpose and audience.
- b) All essential information or ideas are presented.
- c) Some evidence of structure is discernible in the communication.
- d) Spelling, punctuation and syntax are sufficiently accurate to convey meaning.

Evidence Requirements

One piece of written evidence or a portfolio of thematically linked pieces to show that the candidate has achieved all the performance criteria. The piece, or pieces taken together, should amount to no fewer than 100 words.

National unit specification: statement of standards

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

Simple written communication

The candidate will produce simple written communication which presents information of a basic nature. It will convey several items of information and/or opinions or ideas. Where appropriate, opinions or ideas may be presented in concrete personal terms. The layout, word choice and any use of graphics or pictures will be appropriate to purpose, context and target audience. The vocabulary and sentence structure will be simple. Some errors may be present but these will not prevent the reader from grasping the meaning.

OUTCOME 3

Produce and respond to simple oral communication.

Performance Criteria

- a) An appropriate range of spoken language structures is used.
- b) The communication conveys simple information, opinions or ideas.
- c) An attempt is made to sequence and link information, opinions or ideas.
- d) Delivery takes account of situation and audience.
- e) Responses take account of the contributions of other(s).

Evidence Requirements

All the performance criteria must be met in one spoken interaction (discussion or presentation) with one or more people. A brief note of context and source will accompany the evidence, which could take the form of a checklist or recording. An individual presentation should last for a minimum of two minutes with additional time for questions.

In a spoken interaction at this level

The candidate will convey simple information, opinions or ideas with sequencing and linking appropriate to purpose and situation. Simple vocabulary in an appropriate register will be used and the vocabulary and the structure of the communication will allow the speaker's meaning to be conveyed. Delivery will be audible with some use of appropriate non-verbal conventions. The candidate will respond to points of view or questions from others.

National unit specification: support notes

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

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 content and context for this core skills unit should be appropriate to the personal and/or vocational needs of the candidate.

Core skills units are stated at five levels of attainment, with activities becoming progressively more demanding in breadth and depth, and in the extent of individual autonomy required. The appendix to this unit shows the relationship between the levels in Communication.

The programme in Communication should develop:

- the basic skills required for reading texts
- the basic skills required for reading and researching topics and texts
- the basic skills required for informational and expressive writing
- the basic skills required for writing notes and plans
- the basic skills required for talk, discussion and listening.

The programme in Communication should provide opportunities to:

- use language for a variety of purposes with a balance between productive and receptive modes
- use language in a range of settings - personal, social and vocational
- read a variety of texts which offer a range of reading demands
- use a range of written forms including graphical and pictorial
- use a range of forms of oral communication with a balance between productive and receptive modes.

Outcome 1

Non-fiction texts must be used. Candidates' reading should include a variety of texts and graphical and pictorial representations which offer a range of reading demands, e.g. books; newspapers and magazines; pamphlets; notices; advertisements; instructions; graphs; diagrams; tables; charts; and reports. The texts should be related to candidates' personal interests, the area of study or the work setting. All vocabulary should be familiar to the candidate. Sentences should be simple in structure. Where linkage occurs it should be straightforward. The communication should be brief. The texts should express content in a direct uncomplicated way and the key points should be explicit. Texts should contain several items of information.

Texts can include, e.g., a short item from a popular newspaper or magazine; a short letter to a newspaper or magazine; a short business letter; a leaflet; a notice. Texts may also include images, e.g. mail order catalogues; simple advertisements; instruction leaflets. In these, the text may be supported by simple diagrams, tables, charts or photographs.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

The *purpose* of the communication should be to convey several items of information and/or a discernible personal point of view. Main purposes can include to inform or report; to persuade; to express feelings or reactions; to share an experience; to entertain. The candidate should be able to identify the main purpose of the text and to show some awareness of the context in which the information is conveyed.

The *conventions* used - layout, use of graphics, vocabulary, degree of formality and structure - should support the purpose of the communication and be wholly consistent with the type of text, e.g. use of headlines, columns and appropriate style in a newspaper article.

Evaluation by the candidate will be at a basic level and should be supported by a single piece of evidence from the text.

Outcome 2

Candidates should use language for a variety of purposes appropriate to their individual needs, e.g. conveying information; describing feelings; putting forward a point of view; requesting information; keeping records.

Written communication which the candidate produces should be related to personal interests or to an area of study or the work setting. Texts may include, e.g. short letters, articles, diaries, log books. Texts may also include images, e.g. simple diagrams, maps, charts, tables, sketches or photographs may be used in support of the written text. The images may be produced by the candidate or selected from a bank of images.

Layout, word choice and any use of graphics or pictures should be appropriate to purpose, context and target audience.

It is anticipated that a word length of no fewer than 100 words would be required to demonstrate competence at this level. Where a portfolio of evidence is being used for assessment requirements (e.g. letter, diary entry, log, and information sheet) the pieces should be linked and cover an issue related to personal interest, an area of study or the work setting. The pieces taken together should amount to no fewer than 100 words.

Outcome 3

Candidates should use language for a variety of purposes appropriate to their individual needs e.g. conveying information, opinions or ideas at a simple level on a straightforward topic.

In their spoken interaction, candidates may, for example:

- give a short talk which conveys basic information
- give simple directions
- take part in a discussion on a simple, familiar topic.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

Topics might include, for example, findings from a project or a piece of research on which the candidate has been working, or a tutorial topic which is explored in discussion. Individual talk will convey basic information or express a point of view on a straightforward topic. At this level, an individual presentation should last for a minimum of two minutes with additional time for questions. A group discussion will deal with a simple topic.

Candidates should attempt to *sequence and link ideas*, e.g. directions should be given in the correct order; a short talk should include a recognisable beginning and end and rudimentary linkage.

It is likely that group discussion would involve two or more people but an interview conducted on a one to one basis could also be used to demonstrate the standard of oral communication skills which covers the performance criteria.

In *taking account of contributions of others* candidates should be able to repeat information, ask questions or answer questions as appropriate.

Delivery should be audible and candidates should make some use of appropriate non-verbal conventions, e.g. making appropriate eye contact or gestures; pausing at appropriate points.

In creating a checklist for Outcome 3, teacher/lecturers should find the detail provided under *Evidence Requirements* helpful.

GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

The learning and teaching approaches should encourage candidates to identify the evidence of their attainment and to transfer the skills acquired to other contexts.

Programmes of work in Communication should be designed to engage candidates in the varied and purposeful use of interrelated skills of language through a range of tasks. These tasks may reflect the candidates' vocational interest or may be of more general interest. It is recommended that these tasks should be negotiated and planned in such a way that the evidence required for assessment is generated in the course of ongoing work rather than as a discrete exercise.

Learning and teaching in Communication should be active and candidate-centred. Candidates should have the opportunity to plan and make decisions for themselves, to show initiative and independence and to work co-operatively in groups. Activities should provide opportunities to use language in real situations for real purposes and may be part of projects or practical exercises set within the Communication programme or drawn from activities in other vocational and social contexts.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

Opportunities for rewriting, reviewing, revising and evaluating by the candidate, by peers and by the teacher/lecturer should be seen as an essential feature of all formative activities. The candidates should be involved in activities which stretch their capabilities.

The use of dictionaries should be encouraged at all stages. Word processors, including those which can make use of spelling check type software, may be used by candidates.

In oral communication, recordings of candidate performance at this level would enable others to appreciate the standard required. Recorded evidence of candidate performance would also assist internal and external verification.

Where the Communication unit is being combined with another unit to create an enhanced learning and teaching programme, care must be taken to ensure that all aspects of each unit are covered and adequate time must be allowed for the coverage of both units. Such a programme would create opportunities to consolidate the skills gained in this unit.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

The statement of satisfactory performance for each outcome indicates the minimum required for the purpose of summative assessment. However, the number of activities undertaken by the candidate in the course of the unit should not be limited to those specified for assessment purposes. In awarding the candidate Communication at Access 3 the teacher/lecturer must be confident that the candidate will be able to demonstrate these skills in any context and set of circumstances.

Teachers/lecturers must remember to distinguish between their differing roles in formative and summative assessment. In the former, as much help and support as is required by the candidate may legitimately be given by the teacher/lecturer. *Tasks which are used to provide evidence for summative assessment must be completed by the candidate unaided.* It would, however, be acceptable for the teacher/lecturer to draw the candidate's attention to any general area of error in relation to particular performance criteria or redirect him or her to the task in hand.

Where the candidate is responding orally in Outcome 1, detailed evidence (transcript, recording) must be retained for verification purposes. In Outcome 3, a brief note of context and source, whether for an individual presentation or group discussion, should accompany the evidence, which could take the form of a checklist or recording.

Evidence of attainment should be gathered, wherever possible, from integrated activities, whether this unit is being studied as a stand alone unit or is being used in combination with others.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Communication (Access 3)

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).

Core skills units

Appendix

Communication: progression chart

Skill	Access 2	Access 3	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2	Higher
Reading	Respond to very simple written communication	Respond to simple written communication	Respond to simple but detailed written communication	Respond to accessible written communication	Respond to complex written communication
Writing	Produce very simple written communication	Produce simple written communication	Produce simple but detailed written communication	Produce well-structured written communication	Produce well-structured written communication on a complex topic
Talking and listening	Produce and respond to very simple oral communication	Produce and respond to simple oral communication	Produce and respond to simple but detailed oral communication	Produce and respond to oral communication	Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic