



**PROBLEM SOLVING**  
**SCQF Level 4**  
**40 Hour Unit (F3GD 10)**

# 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 straightforward problems in everyday, familiar settings.

If there are any words in this Unit you do not understand, 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 3. Alternatively, you may be able to show that you have similar experience of solving problems, for example troubleshooting malfunctioning audio equipment, working out a study timetable, or redesigning stationery.

## What do I need to do?

You will:

- ◆ identify the main factors affecting a straightforward situation or issue (for example, what are the causes)
- ◆ consider what could be done, decide on an approach to solve the problem, and, if it's appropriate, ask for information and help from others (for example, your tutor or other learners)
- ◆ work out an action plan to deal with the problem (for example, what steps are involved, in which order should the steps be done. who should do each step, are there any limitations you must work within, and do you need permission to carry out any steps in your action plan)
- ◆ choose and obtain the resources you will need to carry out the action plan (for example, equipment, information, money, or input from other people)
- ◆ carry out the action plan and then check whether or not it is complete
- ◆ identify the strengths and weaknesses of your action plan (for example, did the action plan run to time, did everyone carry out the steps they were given, and were your resources appropriate to the steps)
- ◆ based on this experience, draw conclusions and, if appropriate, consider alternative ways of solving similar problems in the future

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 and carry out an action plan to try to solve the problem, and then review how effective your action plan has been based on the evidence you have.

You may have written evidence, such as notes of discussions, the action plan itself, and 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:

- ◆ You want to re-decorate your bedroom. You decide which activities need to be done by yourself or trades people, choose materials, and work out a timetable and budget.
- ◆ You want to learn how to speak Spanish for your holiday next year. You research the types of courses available to you; the costs, locations, level of difficulty, class times, etc; and decide on your most suitable option.
- ◆ You keep running out of the parts required for a particular repair job in your work. You look at the reasons for this and set up a system for re-ordering parts to make sure that the parts are always available.
- ◆ You are deciding on your course choices for the next school session. You research which subjects would prepare you best for the career or further/higher education you wish to take up on leaving school, and make your choice of subjects on the basis of the information you have gathered.

## What can I do next?

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

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 4 learners are expected to be able to work with straightforward problems and will require limited 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

Learners will recognise and analyse the main factors affecting a straightforward situation or issue in a context that is familiar to them. There will be a small number of variables and the relationships between them will be clear to the learners. The learners will then evaluate the situation by summarising, explaining, or drawing conclusions. From this evaluation the learners will devise a strategy to deal with the situation. There may be several possible strategies/approaches and, with your support, the learners will devise the most appropriate solution. Approaches should be obvious, straightforward, and may include making a simple change to a known process.

### Planning and organising

Learners will develop an action plan. The relationships between the component steps should be clear. The plan will be linear and will include appropriate resources familiar to the learners.

### Reviewing and evaluating

On completion of the problem solving activity, the learners will decide on a small number of criteria to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their action plan.

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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### Credit value

6 SCQF credit points (1 SQA credit) at SCQF level 4



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