

WORKPLACE CORE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SUPPORT PACK



COMMUNICATION SCQF Level 3

Part 1: Information for assessors

Part 2: Exemplar assessment tasks

Part 3: Exemplar recording documentation

Part 1: Information for assessors

What is involved?

The Unit is designed for the workplace and the content should involve tasks and skills that are suited to the requirements of the candidate's working environment.

The focus of the Unit is on transferable communication skills:

- ◆ reading for information
- ◆ writing
- ◆ speaking and listening

These skills should be useful to candidates in their current and future jobs, as well as in their social and personal lives.

The Unit is designed for those who have little or no skill and experience in communicating within the workplace. The work undertaken in the assessments should be simple and routine, eg at trainee level. The Unit might be suitable for candidates who are currently working towards an SVQ/NVQ at level 1 or level 2.

Communication tasks can be combined with the other Core Skills Units: Numeracy, Working with Others, Problem Solving, and Information and Communication Technology. If you adopt this approach, records must be kept for each Core Skills Unit.

Guidance on the Unit

Candidates at SCQF level 3 are required to communicate with others using simple language in familiar situations. They may need some support to carry out the tasks, either from you or from a supervisor or other workplace mentor.

The 'What do I need to do' section of the Unit lists the knowledge, understanding, and competence that candidates must have and what they need to do to prove this. You may want to discuss these with the candidates. The following notes give detailed pointers on the things candidates need to know and be able to do.

What candidates need to do

Reading and understanding

In the workplace, a written communication is often called a 'document' and might be a report, leaflet, letter, notice, or memo on a notice board, or an e-mail.

Working out the purpose of a document

Candidates must identify a document, read it, and recognise its purpose. In deciding on the purpose, candidates will need to identify who it is written for and why. For example:

- ◆ giving instructions
- ◆ presenting information
- ◆ explaining a point of view

Picking out important points from the document

Candidates must identify:

- ◆ the main points that the writer is making
- ◆ points that back up the main idea
- ◆ action or information that the writer is looking for in response to the communication

For example, if there is a health and safety notice on the notice board in the staff common room, what detailed information or instruction is being conveyed? If a marketing company has sent out an advertising flyer, what product or service is being promoted and at what price? There may be one main idea, backed up by other points. Sometimes the writer is expecting action to be taken or information to be supplied by the reader; the candidate should be able to respond to this.

Deciding if the document works

Candidates must be able to say if the document works, eg by identifying whether:

- ◆ the information was clearly expressed or instructions were clear and easy to follow
- ◆ it contained all the information the reader needed
- ◆ the language was familiar and understandable
- ◆ it explained any specialist words or jargon

For example, a notice about emergency evacuation procedures only achieves its purpose if the readers understand what they are expected to do and can follow the escape routes.

Writing

Producing a written communication may be a familiar part of some candidates' working routine. For others, appropriate writing tasks may not occur naturally in the workplace and you may have to design a suitable task, which should relate to the everyday working experience of the candidates. Written tasks may be produced electronically.

Writing for the reader

The intended readership and the reason for writing will influence the content, format, and layout of the document. Candidates need to decide for whom they are writing, eg clients, colleagues, management, or the public. They must also identify the reason for writing, eg:

- ◆ giving instructions
- ◆ presenting information
- ◆ explaining a point of view

Choosing a suitable format

Different formats are appropriate for different situations. Documents can include reports, leaflets, letters, notices, and e-mails. The reason for writing and the intended readers will influence the choice of format, eg whether to write a short formal report on a piece of work completed or an e-mail to a colleague giving an update on the latest plans for the redesign of a new office.

Choosing layout, order, words, and graphics

Thinking about the potential readers, the content, and the format will help candidates select an appropriate structure and layout. In some workplaces there may well be a prescribed way of writing reports, letters, and e-mails, in which case the candidate should follow the general rules. In most documents, candidates will have to:

- ◆ write in a logical order
- ◆ use paragraphs and headings if appropriate
- ◆ express the main idea first, or give it prominent placing, with supplementary information following
- ◆ use vocabulary familiar to the reader
- ◆ include other items, eg maps, diagrams, pie charts, and photographs, in support of the text if appropriate; these may be selected from a bank of images or created by the candidates

Including relevant information and/or ideas

Candidates should be clear about their main topic/idea, and only include in their document material that is relevant.

Using simple vocabulary, sentence structure, and punctuation

At this level, candidates should be able to use:

- ◆ simple vocabulary
- ◆ simple sentence structures
- ◆ simple punctuation conventions, eg capital letters, full stops, commas, and question marks

There may be errors but these should not prevent the reader from grasping the meaning.

Spell simple words correctly

Candidates should spell simple words correctly and be encouraged to check any words they are not sure of by using a dictionary, spell-checker, or thesaurus.

Speaking and listening

Speaking and listening skills can be developed and assessed in a number of ways that can be adapted to the working environment of the candidates. Naturally occurring discussions on any aspect of work provide ideal opportunities for assessment. Alternatively, candidates may wish to give a short presentation or demonstration about a particular project, product, or service, taking questions from the listeners.

Candidates should be encouraged to prepare for their discussion or presentation, making sure they are clear about what they want to say.

Speaking to ensure understanding

Candidates must express their ideas clearly, in a way that listeners will be able to understand. They must:

- ◆ present information in a logical order, eg usually the most important idea or information first
- ◆ choose vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic
- ◆ explain any technical words or abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to the some listeners (eg in a workplace briefing)
- ◆ use some of the most common spoken conventions to aid understanding, eg speaking slowly, clearly, and loudly enough, and pausing to allow for a response from the listener

Using body language

Body language is a valuable supplement to speech and candidates need to make use of this. Candidates should be encouraged to try to look as relaxed as possible (even if they are nervous) and smile (if it is appropriate to do so). The main ways body language can be expressed are:

- ◆ posture
- ◆ eye contact
- ◆ facial expression
- ◆ gesture

Listening carefully and responding to questions

It is important that candidates allow listeners the opportunity to ask questions and respond accordingly. It is often appropriate to pause at intervals while speaking to allow other people to speak. For example, the candidate must be prepared to:

- ◆ provide additional information
- ◆ clarify any points
- ◆ explain the meaning of any words or terms that were not understood

Picking out the main points when listening

Candidates will be expected to listen carefully to what others are saying and must be able to:

- ◆ identify the main points
- ◆ interpret other methods that speakers use to get their message across, eg their tone of voice or body language

Asking questions

Candidates should ask questions at suitable times during or after a discussion or presentation if they need to. They must ask for clarification on any words or technical terms they have not understood, and be prepared to ask for additional information.

How do candidates show they have achieved the Unit?

The Unit requires the candidates to provide evidence for each of the three tasks.

Task 1: Reading and understanding

Candidates have to read a short document related to their work. They must then show their understanding of the document by a written, physical, or oral response.

Task 2: Writing

Candidates have to produce a document or related documents of 80 words or more that conveys several pieces of information, opinions, or ideas related to their work.

Task 3: Speaking and listening

Candidates must either discuss a work-related topic with one or more people (lasting a minimum of two minutes) or make a short presentation on a work-related topic to one or more people (lasting a minimum of one minute with additional time for questions).

Candidates must prove that they can do the whole of each individual task at one time. They must not gather evidence from different situations for different parts of the task.

The three communication tasks can often be part of a single strand of work. For example, the candidate may have to read a simple document, write a short note on the topic, and discuss it with colleagues.

Assessment requirements

Reading and understanding

You should choose reading material on a non-fiction topic that conveys several pieces of information. The topic should be one that is simple and familiar to the candidate from their workplace experiences. Texts with a practical purpose are most suitable. These may include images as well as words. Vocabulary should be familiar to the candidates. The reading material will be brief, its purpose clear, the key points explicit, and the content direct and uncomplicated. The reading material must use conventions typical of the format chosen (eg layout, language, use of pictures or other supportive material, level of formality).

Writing

You should use a task that is familiar and routine for the candidates in their workplace. Documents produced by the candidates may include images such as maps, sketches, diagrams, or photographs in support of the written text. These images may be selected by the candidates from a bank of images or created by candidates themselves. The candidates will use simple vocabulary and sentence structures. Errors may be present but these should not prevent the reader from grasping the meaning.

Speaking and listening

The oral communication must be one spoken interaction between the candidate and one or more people. The topic should be one that is simple and familiar to the candidate.

Gathering evidence

It may be appropriate for you to gather written evidence produced by the candidate while carrying out the practical tasks. However, written evidence is not essential for the reading and speaking/listening elements of this Unit and is inappropriate if it disadvantages the candidate.

You may wish instead to observe the candidate carrying out a task and use oral questioning. This requires you to create and complete a record of questions asked and candidate responses.

From the candidate's point of view, it is useful to have the means of keeping all the work of this Unit together. You can help here by creating and providing a workbook that includes all the evidence-gathering items. An alternative would be to provide worksheets that can be made into a portfolio or e-portfolio.

If you have chosen to integrate the communication work with other Units being undertaken by the candidate, it may be possible to assess the communication as part of a larger single activity. In this case you must keep separate records for this Unit.

You should try to identify naturally occurring opportunities for assessment where possible. Some of the exemplars in this pack could be used or contextualised for this purpose.

The assessment process is likely to involve one or more of the following:

- ◆ observation
- ◆ recording
- ◆ oral questioning

When assessing by observation, you must keep a detailed checklist. Similarly, if you use oral questioning, you must keep a record of both the questions and the candidate responses. All evidence, whether produced by the candidate or a record made by yourself, must be retained, signed, and dated by you.

Planning

You should work out where opportunities for meeting the Unit standards are likely to arise. Where possible, these should be built into the assessment process. You should explain and discuss this assessment process with the candidates so that they are clear about what is expected of them.

Part 2: Exemplar assessment tasks

Note for assessors

You can use the exemplar assessments given in this section in several ways:

- ◆ to illustrate to candidates the type of materials that could be used to generate evidence
- ◆ to help identify the type and amount of evidence that candidates should have gathered in their portfolio
- ◆ to help identify the level of complexity in evidence required for the Core Skill at this level
- ◆ to help you to identify/create an assessment task related to the candidate's own work environment
- ◆ as an off-the-shelf assessment, although every effort should be made to source/provide candidates with assessment materials that relate to their specific area of work

The exemplars are in the form of a set of instructions. Candidates should refer back to the relevant task in the Unit to help them plan what they need to cover.

Task 1: Reading and understanding

This notice has been pinned to your departmental notice board. Read it carefully then answer the questions in Task 1 of the Unit.

Let's do our bit to reduce waste

Reduce: How about?

- ◆ not printing off e-mails unless we really need to
- ◆ only order materials you know you will use
- ◆ turning off all lights, heating, and equipment when they are not being used

Reuse: How about?

- ◆ re-using scrap paper to write notes to colleagues or ourselves
- ◆ reusing the same bottle and filling it with tap water

Recycle: How about?

- ◆ putting all shredded documents into the recycling bin
- ◆ keeping envelopes for separate disposal

A. Green, Supervisor: Design Department

Task 2: Writing

Produce a letter to a customer you know well to:

- ◆ invite him or her to an evening event
- ◆ explain this is to promote a new product range

The event is at 7.30pm on May 26th, at your workplace. You need to know if the customer can come by 19th May.

Your finished letter must be at least 80 words long, including name, address, and reply details. You might want to include a sketch map of how to find your business premises. Look at Task 2 of the Unit to help you produce this letter.

Task 3: Speaking and listening

Choose one of the following:

Your supervisor has asked your work team to discuss the following topic.

A new hot drinks machine will be installed next week and management wants to know where you think it should be placed:

- ◆ in the staffroom
- ◆ in the corner of the main workspace
- ◆ in the corridor near the staff entrance

Your discussion should last at least two minutes

or

Give a very short talk to other staff to tell them about the work you have done in rearranging the stock room and how the new layout should make things easier for them.

You must speak for at least one minute and allow extra time for questions. Look at Task 3 of the Unit to help you plan your discussion or talk.

Part 3: Exemplar recording documentation

This section gives some examples of forms that could be used by candidates and/or assessors to gather evidence and record assessment decisions.

You are encouraged to adapt these materials to suit you and your candidate's preferred approach, ie boxes can be made bigger, format can be changed to a non-table format, font size etc.

Assessment plan

You should work out where naturally occurring opportunities for meeting the standards are likely to arise and, where possible, build them into the assessment process.

You should explain and discuss the assessment process with candidates so they are clear about what is expected of them.

Assessment checklists

Candidates could use the assessment checklists as a means of cross-referencing evidence in their portfolio to the Unit.

Assessors could use the assessment checklists to record assessment decisions and any relevant comments.

Summary checklist

The summary checklist could be used to record the assessment decisions from the assessment checklists on a single form.

Assessment plan

Communication (SCQF level 3)

Candidate: _____

Task to be assessed: _____

Proposed date of assessment: _____

| Proposed method of assessment | Tick | Notes |
|---|------|-------|
| Assignment or project | | |
| Observed performance | | |
| Witness testimony | | |
| Written questions | | |
| Oral questioning | | |
| Product evaluation, eg written document | | |
| Previous evidence | | |
| Other evidence | | |

Details agreed and signed by:

Assessor _____

Candidate _____

Line manager (if required) _____

Date _____

Assessment checklist

Communication (SCQF level 3)

Task 1: Reading and understanding

Candidate name: _____ Date: _____

| Task 1: Read and understand a simple work-related document. | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Evidence | Assessor initials and date | Comments |
| Worked out the purpose of the document | | | |
| Picked out important ideas and key points in the document | | | |
| Decided on whether or not the document works | | | |

Assessment checklist

Communication (SCQF level 3)

Task 2: Writing

Candidate name: _____

Date: _____

Task 2: Produce a document or related documents totalling 80 words or more, which conveys several pieces of information, opinions, or ideas.

| | Evidence | Assessor initials and date | Comments |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Identified who will read the document and reason for producing it | | | |
| Used a format which was appropriate for the readers | | | |
| Used layout, order, words, and appropriate graphics that make the piece of writing clear | | | |
| Included relevant information and/or ideas | | | |
| Used simple vocabulary, sentence structure, and punctuation | | | |
| Spelt simple words correctly | | | |

Assessment checklist

Communication (SCQF level 3)

Task 3: Speaking and listening

Candidate name: _____

Date: _____

Task 3: Take part in a simple discussion on a work-related topic (lasting a minimum of two minutes) or give a short presentation on a work-related topic to one or more people (lasting a minimum of one minute with additional time for questions).

| Speaking | Evidence | Assessor initials and date | Comments |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Expressed information, opinions, or ideas clearly when speaking | | | |
| Used words that fitted the topic and that the listeners understood | | | |
| Spoke in a way that listeners understood | | | |
| Used appropriate body language | | | |
| Listened carefully to any questions and responded accordingly | | | |
| Listening | Evidence | Assessor initials and date | Comments |
| Picked out the main points the speaker was making | | | |
| Interpreted the way the speaker used their voice and body language to help get their message across | | | |
| Listened carefully and asked questions to clarify anything | | | |

Summary checklist

Communication (SCQF level 3)

Candidate name: _____

Candidate number: _____

Centre: _____

| Task | Date achieved |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Reading and understanding | |
| 2 Writing | |
| 3 Speaking and listening | |
| Assessor's signature: _____ | Date: _____ |

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Credit Value

6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 3



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