National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Work-based Challenge Unit

Unit code: completed by SQA

Superclass: completed by SQA

Publication date: completed by SQA

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: completed by SQA

Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to develop and apply meta skills across a range of work-based learning contexts. In order to prepare for Industry 4.0 (or the fourth industrial revolution), Skills Development Scotland has identified that meta skills are the human skills needed to drive innovation, create adaptive resilience, encourage entrepreneurial behaviour, and ensure our future success, regardless of context, This Unit requires learners to undertake a project on their own or working as part of a team to develop, apply and reflect on their Innovation, Self-Management and Social Intelligence meta-skills.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

1 Create an integrated project delivery and meta-skills development plan
2 Develop and apply meta-skills through delivery of the project
3 Evaluate development and application of meta-skills in the delivery of the project

Credit points and level

One National Unit credit at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

Recommended entry to the unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this unit.

Context for delivery

Learners should carry out this work-based skills challenge after completion or whilst undertaking a programme of learning at SCQF level 6 which provides the required technical skills and context to be applied in the project.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website **(http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html)**.

Equality and inclusion

This work-based challenge has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

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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 SQA.

Outcome 1

Create an integrated project delivery and meta-skills development plan

Performance criteria

(a) Explain the objectives of the project
(b) Agree the project activities and associated timelines
(c) Identify resources required to deliver the project
(d) Undertake a self-assessment of meta-skills
(e) Identify the technical and meta-skills required to deliver the project
(f) Prepare an integrated project delivery and meta-skills development plan

Outcome 2

Develop and apply meta-skills through delivery of the project

Performance criteria

(a) Carry-out the identified project activities
(b) Collaborate effectively with others throughout delivery of the project
(c) Communicate effectively with others throughout delivery of the project
(d) Reflect on meta-skills development and application throughout delivery of the project

Outcome 3

Evaluate development and application of meta-skills in the delivery of the project

Performance criteria

(a) Evaluate project outcomes against the initial project delivery plan
(b) Reflect on meta-skills development and application at the end of the project
(c) Explain how Self-Management, Social Intelligence and Innovation meta-skills were developed and applied in combination in the delivery of the project
(d) Explain goals for future development of personal meta-skills

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Work-based Challenge Unit

Evidence requirements for this unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

The evidence will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the duration of the work-based skills challenge. It must be specific to each learner and where tasks are completed as part of a group activity the evidence must reflect each learner's contribution to the work of the group. The evidence relating to meta-skills development will always be learner specific as it relates to their own self-analysis, goal setting and self-reflection.

At SCQF level 6, in this project-based assessment it is expected that learners will take responsibility for carrying out a range of activities with a clear goal. This will include working with a range of knowledge, theories and ideas relating to a subject/discipline or sector. Additionally, learners are required to plan how skills will be used and adapt these, as necessary.

Outcome 1

Learners must:

- explain that they understand clearly why the project is required
- agree the activities and resources required to deliver the project and realistic timelines with relevant stakeholders, for example, work placement employer, peers, co-workers. If working as part of a team, a learner should take responsibility for at least one aspect of the project, in terms of: time, tasks, resources and processes, outputs as appropriate.
- undertake a self-assessment of own strengths and weaknesses for meta-skill development. At least three strengths and three areas for development must be identified. This must include one strength and one weakness from each of Innovation, Self-Management and Social Intelligence.
- identify the meta-skills and the technical (contextual, sectoral and/or industry) skills needed to undertake the project
- produce a project plan outlining clearly how the project will be delivered and how at least one meta skill from each of Innovation, Self-Management and Social Intelligence will be developed and applied in its delivery.

Outcome 2

Learners must:

- carry-out all planned project and meta-skills development activities
- communicate and collaborate with at least two others in the delivery of the project
- use reflective practice to monitor progress against project delivery and meta-skills development plan, making and justifying any adjustments if necessary.

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Outcome 3

Learners must:

- make several points of evaluation which draw cause and effect between actions/decisions and effectiveness, success and/or room for improvement.
- carry out a final review of personal meta-skills developed during the project, linking this to the areas for development identified at the beginning of the unit and the activities taken to increase effectiveness. This should clearly explain how Self-Management, Social Intelligence and Innovation meta-skills were developed and applied in *combination* in the delivery of the project
- set and explain goals for future meta-skills development.

It is essential that evidence of meta-skills is collected on an ongoing basis. Throughout the project, learners should be encouraged to continuously reflect on the meta-skills they are developing and to record their personal reflections as they go. This will help ensure that each learner is aware of and appreciates their own personal learner journey.

Evidence may be presented in any suitable format, and the use of digital evidence and other innovative approaches is encouraged where appropriate. Centres should take account of each learner's normal modes of communication when deciding the most appropriate type of evidence to collect. A range of evidence types could be appropriate, including but not limited to:

- written and/or oral evidence (oral evidence could be audio recorded or scribed, where appropriate). This could include:
  - the learner's own responses to questionnaires, structured questions or reflective responses within workbooks or a personal portfolio
  - observation checklists completed by the assessor
  - witness testimony (e.g. feedback received from the client/employer, the tutor/assessor and from peers).
  - Blogs and/or electronic personal diaries
- filmed evidence, covering: the demonstration of skills; contributions to group discussions; presentation of information; vlogs etc
- presentation slides.

The project-based approach by its nature embeds meta-skills relating to the three categories of self-management, social intelligence, and innovation. It also provides context for the development of an extended range of meta-skills across these categories. Evidence should reflect the **process** of developing meta-skills through regular, authentic and supported reflective practice and goal setting in the context of the project, referencing those meta-skills relevant to the learner and project/sector, rather than mechanistic coverage which simply notes where particular meta-skills have been observed.

Identification of six strengths and areas for development have been given in evidence requirements for self-assessment, and in further goal setting and reflection, it is expected that at least 3 or these should be considered as detailed in evidence requirements. This is to reflect appropriate assessment sampling for SCQF level 6 and to prevent over-assessment. However, this should not limit the exploration of meta-skills in learning and teaching, and learners can set goals in relation to more than three if they wish. It is not necessary to consider, cover or develop each meta-skill in the same way or to the same depth. Individualistic, context-based reflection and development will lead to unique evidence.

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

The project does not need to be a success for learners to achieve the requirements of the work-based skills challenge. Projects that encounter problems, change direction, or fail to deliver their objectives can still provide ample learning opportunities for those involved. Clearly, it will be preferable to have a successful conclusion to the project, but learners can still provide evidence for meta-skills where projects are less successful. In this circumstance, regular reflection and evaluation should reflect the difficulties encountered.

Teachers/lecturers should assist learners to identify and reflect on their meta-skills strengths and areas for improvement, and the ways in which these develop and improve. This must focus on the effort made to improve skills rather than only on the skills themselves.

National Unit Support Notes

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Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This Unit has been developed as a vehicle for the development, application, and assessment of meta skills across a range of Foundation Apprenticeships at SCQF level 6. However, it has been designed as flexibly as possible so that it can be used in a range of work-based learning contexts other than Foundation Apprenticeships.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

According to the Association of Project Management[1], a *project* is a unique, transient endeavour undertaken to bring about change and to achieve planned objectives. Creating and coping with change are at the heart of meta skills and the project should encourage the development of *Innovation* supported by *Self-Management* and *Social Intelligence* meta skills. Projects should be selected to provide sufficient emphasis for learners to engage with opportunities for improvement and innovation in the relevant sectoral context but also in terms of SCQF Level 6 and 6 SCQF Credit points.

Meta-skills

The work-based skills challenge has been developed with the concepts of meta-skills at its foundation, placing emphasis on their development through a practical, work-based approach and encouraging the acquisition of new skills through collaborative group working, problem solving activities and reflective practice. Learners are expected to judge where their strengths and development needs for meta-skills lie through self-reflection and feedback from different sources and at different times.

In response to the concept of industry 4.0 (or the 'fourth industrial revolution'), twelve meta-skills have been identified as those which will help learners to adapt to and embrace the inevitable changes to industry, job roles and society expected as a result of continuing technological advance and other global mega-trends and shifts. These skills have been grouped into three broad categories: innovation', 'self-management' and 'social intelligence' and within each main category there are up to four sub skills that are each made up of several skills. Therefore, learners will be able to select from a large list of skills those which most closely reflect the individual skills they aim to develop by participating in the project and sector context of the work-based skills challenge.

[1] https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/glossary/#p (Accessed: 07 September 2020)

More information about meta-skills can be found via the centre of work-based learning's white paper on the topic, available from (https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44684/skills-40_a-skills-model.pdf). The meta-skills framework below is taken from this paper.

Meta-skills in teaching and learning

The focus of the work-based skills challenge is to encourage learners to develop, utilise and reflect on meta-skills through activities to plan, complete and review the challenge project.

Core enablers of meta-skills development include: an awareness of self, active goal setting, and effort and attention to planned and evident change. Meta-skills are not lists to be mechanistically observed or ticked off as having been evidenced or used. Where they are embedded in project tasks, they provide a context for planning, practise, and reflection. Learners can focus on any meta-skills appropriate to them and their context, and in the work-based skills challenge and the linked course/sector, there will be meta-skills that many or all learners will focus on. However, teaching and learning should also facilitate individualistic development, which will vary across learners. Learners will have their own strength and areas for development and there is no requirement to reach a level of development in relation to any specific meta-skill. It is the **process** of development that is important to be assessed. The co-creation of a clear learning plan for and with individuals is encouraged and can provide evidence of learner development.

To prepare learners for this, centres should spend time at the beginning of the project helping learners to understand the concepts of meta-skills and the usefulness of them for personal development and life in and out of the workplace. Meta-skills could be introduced as tools that enable learners to apply and adapt technical skills, and develop adaptive resilience, in response to real world challenges and opportunities.

At SCQF level 6, terminology from the Skills 4.0 model should be used by tutors/teachers/mentors and understood by learners.

Descriptions of abilities and skills that relate to meta-skills can be co-created by the learner group and teacher/lecturer. These can come from self-profiling, exploration of the world of work generally and the linked sector specifically, and from discussion with peers, employers, and teachers/lecturers. Thinking about meta-skills required for successfully completing the project tasks will also be important and, alongside general personal goals, provides a context for reflection on meta-skills development throughout the course of the project.

Introducing the basics of reflective practice and its value for continuous learning and development and adapting to change can help to support active engagement with the learner's personal development and goal setting. Frequent formative peer-to-peer, assessor, client, and group reflection activity will support learners to build up a level of familiarity and comfort with this reflective practice. Teachers/lecturers and employer partners could guide learners by taking a coaching and mentoring approach to supporting goal setting, reflective practice and making changes.

The use of case studies and scenario-based discussion and activities to demonstrate the value of meta-skills and how they can be used in practical terms, could increase learners' awareness of these skills and their application. You could provide opportunities for peer reflection activity in which a cohort or team of learners share experiences and reflections on how they could apply meta-skills in the context of their work-based skills challenge. Adopting the role of mentor/coach/facilitator in such group activities would be effective in drawing earners' attention to situations where meta-skills have or could have been applied and help develop self-awareness and goals through their own and others' experiences.

Reflective discussions can focus on how and where the various meta-skills are being developed through the teaching and delivery of the work-based skills challenge. Positive recognition should be included in discussions with learners, as well as guidance on steps for future development based on behavioural evidence from participating in various activities. As

learners progress through the work-based skills challenge, opportunities could be taken to introduce problem recognition and problem solving, both of which necessitate the synthesis of multiple meta-skills to add value or overcome challenge.

While the knowledge and skills for the practical aspects of the work-based skills challenge could be delivered in sequence, the knowledge and skills requirements related to meta-skills development will offer most benefit to learners if delivered in parallel with project planning and development, with learners being supported to engage in reflective practice over the full duration of the project. Such an approach could enable learners to develop their self-awareness and appreciation for continuous learning, while maximising scope for centres to support, coach and mentor learners as they progress through their projects.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

The work-based skills challenge has three outcomes, all of which are assessed within the context of a single project.

Where learners experience assessment methods that meet the purpose of the challenge, this helps them to develop different skills that could be transferable to other personal, work, training, or education contexts.

Assessments should be designed to allow learner evidence to be naturally occurring through the delivery of the work-based skills challenge. For learners to gain most value from their learning, you are encouraged to take a holistic approach to the assessment of the outcomes, knowledge, and skills and, where appropriate, combine assessment with the linked course. Evidence from any task may be used holistically, where appropriate, to satisfy criteria both for the work-based skills challenge and for the linked course.

While the completion of the project tasks will be largely sequential, the iterative nature of meta-skills development means that evidence of this should be collected on an ongoing basis.

When making assessment judgements, it is important that this is focussed on the learner's meta-skills development and reflection in relation to the project, not the quality or success of the practical project outputs themselves. Participation may vary from learner to learner so it is not expected that strengths will be developed in all areas. The nature and requirements of each unique project should contribute to how learners explore, identify, develop, and continuously reflect on the meta-skills needed to support them to achieve their goals. Assessors should holistically examine all the evidence produced and make a professional judgement of how each learner has met all the knowledge and skills requirements within the statement of standards.

Examples of instruments of assessment which could be used are as follows:

Personal portfolio

This could be used to gather and record activities and reflection on the self-assessment, development, final review, and future goal setting in relation to meta-skills development. This might include information from self-profiling tools and exercises, details, and reflection on coaching, mentoring and feedback from assessor, employer client and peers.

A personal portfolio could also be used to gather evidence of project development activities, and include project planning, tasks, outputs and details of monitoring and adjustments, as well any other relevant materials, and a final evaluation of the project.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

Assessing meta-skills development

Assessment of the meta-skills requirements of outcomes 1, 2 and 3 can be carried out holistically across the delivery of the work-based skills challenge, through a mixed-methods approach that provides numerous touch points for learners to reflect on and evaluate their project's progress, as well as situations where meta-skills have or could have been used and how they have developed at an individual level. This could be approached by developing 'can do' statements' for example. These could be used as the basis for learners to conduct a self-assessment, and for self-reflection of their meta-skills at the beginning, during and at the end point of the work-based skills challenge.

This approach could also be used to provide an assessment by peers, the client, or the employer of the learner's meta-skills development. Further evidence could be generated through peer-to-peer evaluation sessions where the learner's project performance is discussed, alongside a focus on meta-skills, and feedback is provided. One-to-one coaching and mentoring sessions, professional discussions between learners and their teachers/lecturers and written/oral evidence in the form of evaluation templates, reflective journals, blogs, or vlogs, could also be used to generate the necessary evidence. In all cases, the method selected should meet the developmental needs of learners, be appropriate for the work-based skills challenge project, and be linked to the linked course.

It may help learners if they are prompted through structured questions that can help focus their reflections (e.g. "did you encounter any challenges or difficulties" or "is there anything you did particularly well"). Learners should record their reflections during the project activity and not wait until the project has been completed.

Assessing project development skills

Assessment of project development across outcomes 1, 2 and 3 could be evidenced using written/oral and performance/folio submission at appropriate points. Specific evidence could include a completed or agreed project brief in which the learners identify their client's needs and the scope and timeline of their project, in addition to a project plan which outlines how the learners intend to tackle the project, with related tasks, timelines, accountabilities and resource requirements. The project plan could also be used iteratively with the plan being revisited and adjusted as the project progresses. Your centre could support digital literacy development by integrating electronic platforms, software, and/or communication tools as part of the brief development and/or planning processes.

You could work with partner employers to identify challenges that reflect those encountered in the real world and are linked to real work situations or challenges facing the employer.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at **www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment**.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

Unit template: June 2017

General information for learners

Unit title: Work-based Challenge Unit

This section needs to have a new emphasis.