SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Continuous Workforce Development (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J491 47

Superclass: GB

Publication date: October 2020

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with the knowledge and understanding of how organisations identify and implement continuous training and development of their employees. In particular, learners will develop the ability to produce an organisational training strategy, design a training programme and training activities and plan an evaluation strategy for the training programme.

Outcomes

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

1   research the concept of continuous employee development.
2   produce a training and development strategy for an organisation.
3   design a training programme for a specific organisational purpose.
4   plan the evaluation of the training programme.

Credit points and level

2 SQA unit credit(s) at SCQF level 7: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the unit

Entry to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be most helpful if the learner had skills in written communication, oral presentation and a general awareness of the role of the training function within organisations.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Core Skill component   Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of this unit specification.

Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

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 unit specification 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.

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.

Where evidence for outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Research the concept of continuous employee development.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ the concept of a learning organisation
♦ the concept and objectives of continuous employee development
♦ the benefits of implementing the practice of continuous employee development for an organisation
♦ explaining the principal training strategies
♦ the responsibilities of individuals, line managers, training staff and senior managers to endorse continuous employee development

Outcome 2

Produce a training and development strategy for an organisation.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ incorporating the organisational requirements in the strategy: corporate plan, culture and structure
♦ short and long-term business objectives
♦ identifying organisational training/development needs
♦ identifying training needs of individuals and groups
♦ identifying any resource requirements and consequential implications for the organisation
♦ training responsibilities of individuals, line managers and training staff and professionals within an organisation
♦ the range of current national training initiatives available to organisations to train and develop their employees
♦ the role of educational establishments, training providers and government agencies
♦ the function of sector skills councils and professional bodies

Outcome 3

Design a training programme for a specific organisational purpose.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ identifying training needs of individuals, groups or the organisation as a whole
♦ identifying SMART learning objectives for the programme and the individual training sessions
♦ selecting the most appropriate delivery methods, resources and presentation skills for the programme content
♦ applying the most appropriate audio-visual aids and/or digital media where required
♦ identifying the costs associated with preparing and delivering the training programme
♦ applying relevant accepted theories of learning

Outcome 4

Plan the evaluation of the training programme.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ applying accepted evaluation theories to the planning of an evaluation strategy
♦ using appropriate evaluation tools and timescales to plan how the evaluation will take place
♦ evaluating the associated costs and the benefits of the programme to the organisation

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills for each outcome in the following forms.

Outcome 1

Learners will produce a written/oral statement about continuous employee development (minimum 500 words). A minimum of five benefits to an organisation of its implementation must also be stated. The statement will evidence the learners' research into the following topics:

♦ concept of the learning organisation
♦ concept and objectives of continuous development
♦ principal training strategies
♦ the responsibilities of individuals, line managers, training staff and senior managers to endorse continuous employee development

Outcome 2

Learners will produce a training and development strategy, written or oral (minimum of 1,000 words) based on a given case study of a fictitious organisation of approximately 200+ employees. The case study will include:

♦ the philosophy of the organisation incorporating the organisational requirements and business objectives which demonstrate the company's commitment to training.

The training and development strategy will:

♦ identify training/development needs of individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole linking these to the timescales of the business objectives.
♦ identify the resource implications of meeting the training/development needs.
♦ propose how training responsibilities should be allocated across the organisation.
♦ make at least two recommendations that will ensure the training and development goals will be achieved.

Learners will produce a commentary (minimum 750 words) also based on the same case study, which will:

♦ summarise the role of national bodies which promote training, and the potential benefits to the organisation
♦ describe at least three current national training initiatives and their value to the organisation
♦ incorporate the role of training providers and educational establishments as well as the function of government agencies, sector skills councils and professional bodies in the training and development of employees

Outcome 3

Learners will design a written training programme which is to be two to three hours in duration, based on the same case study as Outcome 2. The programme should cover the following:

♦ an introductory paragraph describing the rationale for the programme, specifying who the training programme is aimed at (individuals, groups or the organisation as a whole) and describing the learning theories which have influenced the design of the programme (minimum 500 words)
♦ overall aims and objectives for the programme and the training sessions to be written in SMART format and to take account of training needs identified
♦ produce a written training plan which will include a variety of delivery methods and presentation styles
♦ produce written training session plans, as appropriate, to include the use of a variety of audio-visual aids and/or digital media as appropriate to the content of the programme
♦ a list of approximate costs for the preparation and delivery of the programme

Outcome 4

Learners will plan and produce a written evaluation strategy for the training programme in Outcome 3 to describe how the programme will be evaluated. The evaluation strategy will measure:

♦ the extent to which the objectives of the programme have been met
♦ the reaction of the delegates to the programme and its content
♦ the associated costs with regard to the financial viability of the programme
♦ the perceived benefits to the organisation and whether the programme is a worthwhile proposition for future training

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The evaluation strategy will include an explanation of the choice of evaluation methods and materials selected to gather the information required for the evaluation of the programme. The timescales involved in the evaluation process will also be explained.

Product evidence will include one example of each of the evaluation materials to be used.

Learners will also write a short paragraph (500 words) explaining the evaluation theory/ies used to guide the production of the evaluation strategy.

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

The unit is designed to provide learners with a knowledge and understanding of how organisations identify and implement the training and development of their employees for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. This unit is usually an optional unit within an SQA Advanced Certificate framework or can be delivered as a stand-alone unit.

The unit focuses on how training and development of employees is decided upon with particular reference to the training philosophy of an organisation and its willingness to develop its employees. This is explained further within the context of company training and within the role of Government Agencies and professional bodies in developing the skill base of the population as a whole.

The following notes give additional information on each outcome:

Outcome 1 — this outcome will enable learners to be fully aware of the concepts that shape an organisation and commit them to implement continuous employee development.

♦ concept of what a learning organisation is — learners might care to read the exposition by Peter Senge about this concept. The basis of the concept is that the organisation facilitates and encourages learning for its employees at all levels. This is important when organisations are going through a phase of organisational transformation so that all employees are well prepared for the changes.
♦ concept and objectives of continuous development — organisations continue to make changes in our competitive world and for organisations to continue to succeed, will depend on the ability of their employees to adjust to the new challenges. Therefore, the objectives of continuous development are to:
  — improve performance across the organisation
  — identify potential and harness it
  — succession planning so the organisation is well prepared.
♦ the practice of continuous development of employees will bring benefits to an organisation; these benefits might be:
  — increased motivation
  — realisation of the labour force's potential
  — reduced labour turnover
  — organisational stability
  — multi-skilling
  — flexibility

    — fewer skills shortages
    — unifying forces

♦ the principal strategies that organisations can use to develop their employees are:
    — development on the job
    — through work experience
    — structured self-development programmes
    — formal training
    — competence assessment

♦ the responsibilities of individuals, line managers, training staff and senior managers to endorse continuous employee development:
    — individual employees should be encouraged to 'spread the word' about their achievements when undertaking training and development
    — line managers should use appraisals to encourage their staff to develop
    — training staff should ensure their training is interesting and motivating and that they constantly strive to engage with staff to encourage continuous development
    — senior managers should ensure a suitable budget is given over to support continuous development for the benefit of the organisation

Outcome 2 — this outcome will enable learners to better grasp the essential components that require to be taken account of and their importance to the production of a satisfactory training strategy for an organisation.

♦ The corporate plan, corporate culture and corporate structure are key organisational requirements that need to be identified and, decide how these three parts might influence any training strategy and the philosophy of the company as a whole. Training strategies should, therefore, be specifically focused on meeting the short and long-term business objectives and should be relevant to the organisational context.

♦ Identifying what the overall training and development needs are for the organisation can take time, effort and skill to produce. Within this is the identification of training/ development needs of individuals which may be very diverse in both content and level and costly to fund. Groups of employees may require the same type of training and this should prove to be more cost effective and easier to achieve.

♦ Training will be the responsibility of individuals to undertake what is relevant to their job and what is pertinent for job progression and promotion. They should take advantage of any opportunities to improve themselves for the benefit of the organisation. Line Managers have a responsibility to identify their team's individual and group training needs usually through the process of annual career appraisal. Training staff/professionals within the organisation have a responsibility to ensure that any training programmes they develop are suitable and applicable to the identified needs.

It is also important when writing a training strategy to look outside the organisation and think about the national context within which the organisation is operating. The vast majority of organisations operate within an industry sector (for example, business and finance; hospitality; retail; construction) and each of these sectors will benefit from Government support for the development of the organisation and its people. The Government support should ideally identify key priorities for achieving business development and involve itself in training for three main

reasons — development of the national economy; development of population skill base and to maximise competitive advantage of national industries. It is important that learners appreciate the role of their government in wanting to improve life chances for young people, support economic growth and increase the number of jobs.

Learners undertaking this unit outside of Scotland, who are unable to access information about the Scottish and United Kingdom agencies, should be encouraged to research the support available for training and development for business within their region or country.

Examples of Scottish and United Kingdom agencies include the following:

Skills Development Scotland https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk supporting people and businesses to develop and apply their skills. Skills Development Scotland works with partners to provide services that deliver the very best outcomes for Scotland's people, businesses and the economy.

Scottish Enterprise https://www.scottish-enterprise.com provides business development support which encourages economic development, enterprise, innovation and investment in business.

Highlands and Island Enterprise https://www.hie.co.uk Highlands and Islands Enterprise is the Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for a diverse region which covers more than half of Scotland and is home to around 470,000 people.

Investors in People https://www.investorsinpeople.com Investors in People is a standard for people management, offering accreditation to organisations that adhere to the Investors in People standard.

Other bodies who might be consulted when preparing a training strategy could include the following:

Educational establishments — higher and further education colleges — provide training and qualifications in a variety of vocational subjects, eg hairdressing, construction, cookery, engineering, management on a full-time, part-time or day release basis.

Training providers — are independent training companies that provide training in specific subject/skills areas either through government funded schemes or by direct payment from their clients.

Awarding bodies — **www.sqa.org.uk** SQA is the national awarding body for qualifications in Scotland.

Sector skills councils — www.ssda.org.uk/list-of-sector-skills-councils.htm

Sector skills councils are employer-led organisations that cover specific industries in the United Kingdom. SSCs aim to achieve these goals by developing an understanding of the future skills needs in their industry, and contributing to the development of National Occupational Standards,

the design and approval of apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards and creating sector qualification strategies. There are currently nineteen SSCs, covering about 80 per cent of the British workforce. SSCs are licensed by the government through the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Professional bodies
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_professional_associations_in_the_United_Kingdom

This website gives general information about what a professional body is and its purpose.

Outcome 3 — this outcome will enable learners to gain the skills necessary to prepare a training programme from scratch. The learners should present the information for the programme in a folder with the necessary paperwork in order of use as if they were preparing to deliver the programme.

The programme is to be of two to three hours in length. Therefore, what the learners must produce is:

♦ a rationale (reason) for the programme as an introductory paragraph.
♦ a training plan/timetable — this will show the overall timings for all the sub-sections of the programme. This is like an itinerary for the training day.
♦ training session plans — these are what the trainer will use on the training day to keep their training sessions on track and to time. These will also help the trainer to be well prepared in advance for the training. These session plans should be able to be picked up by any trainer who will be able to understand how to deliver the training session using a variety of delivery methods and will know what resources for the session are to be used.
♦ training objectives — the programme should have an overall training aim for the day and then training objectives for each training session. These should be written in a SMART format.
♦ any copies of learner handouts, PowerPoint presentations, activity sheets, list of videos and/or websites should be prepared, and copies put in the folder also.
♦ a list of realistic approximate costs for the training event should be prepared, itemising the resources to be used. For example: costs associated with:
  — the possible hire of a training room specifically for the training
  — the possible hire of presentation equipment
  — the possible fee for a specialist speaker for the training sessions
  — the provision of refreshments for training event
  — the cost of any stationery, other equipment used during the event

Outcome 4 — this outcome will enable learners to write an evaluation strategy and then prepare evaluation materials in preparation for evaluation of the training programme. The materials should be designed to give qualitative and quantitative information in order to judge the value of the training programme for the organisation.

♦ an evaluation strategy — this will describe what, why, when, where, who and how the programme will be evaluated. Learners will:

— devise a method to measure how well the objectives have been met — some kind of short questions or quiz
— design an evaluation questionnaire to measure the reaction of the delegates on the programme
— design a method to decide how cost effective the training programme has been
— devise a method to check the benefits to the organisation of the programme — this may be by devising an initial questionnaire around possible benefits and a follow-up questionnaire after a few months, so a comparison can be made. For example, the initial questionnaire will ask what happens within the organisation at present and the follow-up questionnaire will ask what changes have occurred since the training and how have these changes been of benefit

♦ learners will also explain relevant learning and evaluation theories they have researched and would intend to implement

Examples of the evaluation materials to be used may include, for example: question sheet, multiple choice and online questionnaires, quiz, happy sheet, interviews with line managers, forum groups.

Guidance on approaches to the delivery of this unit

This unit should be seen in the context of an employing organisation of 200 or more employees in any sector of employment, private or public.

The emphasis should be on the contribution that individuals can make to an organisation and in particular, upon the management and use of that contribution.

The unit should also be taught within the context of achieving organisational goals and how the skills and potential of individuals and groups can be harnessed to achieve these. The various ways in which the return from an organisation's human resources may be optimised, should be stressed.

Learners should be encouraged to make use of their own experience, particularly any work experience which included personal training and/or development. Failing this, learners should be encouraged to make use of the wide range of academic and professional literature available.

Reference to current training and development issues is to be encouraged and the use of case study material to compare practices could be used to justify recommended strategies and procedures.

Outcomes 1 and 2 should take 40% of the delivery time and Outcomes 3 and 4 should take the other 60% of the time. Outcomes 1 and 2 are providing the context for continuous development whereas Outcomes 3 and 4 are producing a programme for actual training and development of staff and should require more in-depth research and production of a full training programme. The work produced should be to a standard that a trainer could take the package of information and deliver the training programme. The approach for all four outcomes should be a learner-centred, participative and practical one where blended learning is paramount.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Assessment for all four outcomes may take the form of open-book assessments based on stimulus material. Learners may compile responses from their own research. Assessments may be integrated between outcomes.

Centres will have discretion in designing assessments so that they can assess outcomes individually or combine outcomes where they consider appropriate.

An assessment support pack and marking guidelines have been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Learners' evidence can be authenticated by oral questioning or a professional discussion on the content of the evidence with the assessor.

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment as can be seen in the evidence requirements for the unit. 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.

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, such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres wishing 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

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Throughout the unit, learners should be able to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 by reading, evaluating and understanding written communication of different types and should be producing written documents that convey a range of information and ideas to solve problems. Through group discussion, learners could have the opportunity to communicate orally to individuals and groups by presenting ideas and complex information to others and listening to and understanding others' responses.

Learners may also be able to develop the Core Skill component of Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 by analysing issues and devising and recommending appropriate solutions in Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Learners may be able to develop the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5 through carrying out a range of *ICT* activities, such as internet searches and word processing, in the course of any research for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

The Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 embedded.	06/10/20

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

Further information

Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our Centre Feedback Form.

General information for learners

Unit title: Continuous Workforce Development (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you to decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining: what the unit is about; what you should know or be able to do before you start; what you will need to do during the unit; and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The purpose of this unit is to provide you with a knowledge and understanding of how organisations identify and implement the training and development of their employees for the benefit of the organisation. In particular, this unit will develop your ability to produce a training strategy for an organisation, design a training programme and explain how to implement the practice of continuous development of employees within an organisation.

♦   In Outcome 1 you will undertake some independent and group research into the concept of continuous development, what the benefits for the organisation will be if they decide to implement this practice for their employees. Your research will involve finding out the latest theories on this subject and what the implications will be for the organisation in the case study.
♦   In Outcome 2 You will be introduced to the different philosophies that organisations adopt and what their key business objectives are. You will learn how to produce a training and development strategy based on a case study of a fictitious organisation. To enable you to do this you will learn how to identify training and development needs of individuals, groups and organisations as a whole and how they link to the short and longer term aims of the business objectives. You will also be facilitated and encouraged to make recommendations about how the organisation can fulfil their training and development goals. You will be supported to find out more about the role of the bodies that support and promote training and development that exist locally and the resulting implications for training within the organisation.
♦   In Outcome 3 you will learn how to design and produce a training programme of a specified length making sure you provide aims, objectives and a rationale for the training. You will then think how to make the actual training an interesting, informative and engaging experience for the participants by choosing participative and learner-centred approaches. You will also learn how to prepare an evaluation strategy to ensure that the training programme you have produced is meeting expectations and is cost effective for the organisation.
♦   In Outcome 4 you will be thinking about how you can find out if the training programme designed in Outcome 2 has been successful. Who would you ask, what will you use to find out the information about the value of the programme for the learners and the organisation? You will research learning and evaluation theories to help you design appropriate evaluation tools. You will also plan an evaluation strategy in order to gather reliable and measurable information that could be analysed. The plan will state when and how evaluation will take place.

Over all four outcomes you will develop your written communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills by analysing issues and devising and recommending appropriate solutions. You

may also develop your oral communication skills through group discussion with fellow learners. You will be encouraged to present ideas and complex information to others as well as listening to and understanding others' responses. Through your research for information and production of your evidence for all the outcomes, you will develop your ICT skills.

The Core Skill of Critical Thinking SCQF at level 6 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this Core Skill.